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Promoting communication and fostering
interaction between the generations: A
study of the UK's first purpose-built
intergenerational centre.

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Abstract

As many changes in society, such as increased geographic mobility and improved technological advances, have led to generations frequently becoming segregated from one another, the development of intergenerational shared sites (IGSS) presents a unique opportunity for exchange and interaction between the generations. This study ‘tells the story’ of the development of the UK’s first IGSS – a purpose-built intergenerational centre (the Centre). This study reports a mixed-method qualitative study design to explore the origins of the Centre and some of the ways in which it sought to involve and engage older adults and young people of varying ages and needs. A critical review of a current body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the impacts and benefits of IGSSs is presented. Relevant theoretical perspectives, as they relate to environment, activity, and intergenerational relationships, are applied. Findings highlight the ways in which the processes involved in the development of this unique Centre influenced how it was used and by whom. An analysis of how the design of the Centre – both social and built environments – has promoted or inhibited interaction between the generations is presented alongside a consideration of how the provision of services and activities in the Centre met the needs of potential users in the community it serves. This thesis argues for a case study method of research and thematic analysis, underpinned by ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews. In doing so, key lessons learned for other local councils and the wider international community seeking to improve intergenerational relations and/or develop and design purpose-built intergenerational centres are provided.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this brief introduction to my thesis, I discuss the background to the study of what was the first purpose-built intergenerational centre (hereafter referred to as 'the Centre') in the United Kingdom. I begin by explaining my interests in, and motivations for, undertaking the study; provide an outline of the issues the thesis addresses; and conclude with details of how the thesis is structured and what each of the succeeding chapters cover.

The main aim of the study was to 'tell the story' of the development of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre (hereafter referred to as 'the Centre') located in the London borough of Merton. By means of a mixed-method case study design, it has explored the origins and genesis of the Centre and some of the ways in which, during the early months after its opening in February 2010, it sought to involve and engage older and younger adults in the community it serves. This unique development has also to be considered in the context of, and against a background in which, national policy is beginning to recognise the potential benefits of intergenerational practice. Consequently, a further aim of this study has been to outline the policy and practice contexts against which the Centre has been developed. Alongside this, I consider pertinent theoretical perspectives (as they relate to environment, to activity, and to intergenerational relationships), and

review critically what is currently a body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the impacts and benefits of what are known in the literature as intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs). In doing so, the thesis articulates key lessons learned for other local councils and for the wider international community seeking to develop and design purpose-built intergenerational centres.

1.2 The Personal and the Professional

My interest in, and passion for, intergenerational practice was greatly influenced by my own personal intergenerational relationships - both early in life and later on. Growing up in a multi-generational household with grandparents who greatly supported me throughout my life, coupled with my personal experience volunteering as a live-in 'homesharer' with an older adult for more than a year, provided me with first-hand knowledge and experience of the positive effects that intergenerational relationships can have for both older and younger adults.

Over the course of my professional career I have also worked 'intergenerationally' with people of different age groups across the life course. These experiences have ranged from coordinating intergenerational activities and organising an intergenerational volunteering programme in a community-type setting, to managing a multi-generational housing scheme. While working in these roles, I became aware of the importance of demonstrating the potential impact and benefits of intergenerational practice to those involved and, more widely, to the local community. Moreover, I began to recognise that providing or creating a

physical place, space and/or opportunity for different generations to meet, could help tackle ageism by allowing people to recognise similarities between each other and to appreciate what resources they can offer one another.

My professional career and personal experiences have also been reinforced and challenged through my academic study of ageing: first as a post baccalaureate diploma student in Gerontology in Canada and, subsequently, when I enrolled as an international student on the European Masters in Gerontology programme in 2005. One of the core modules on the European programme was run at Keele University and it was here that I was introduced to 'critical gerontology' and to the concepts and theories surrounding intergenerational practice. Whilst realising how the events and experiences in both my personal and professional life had underpinned my intergenerational interests, I also began critically to question society's role in the increasing segregation of the generations from one another. I subsequently completed a library-based dissertation for my Master's degree on the topic of IGSSs (Melville, 2009), before being afforded the opportunity to undertake the doctoral study reported on here. This study – and this thesis – has therefore brought my personal, professional and academic experiences, knowledge and interests together in a unique way.

1.3 Background to the study

Over the last decade, intergenerational activities have become increasingly well-established throughout the UK. In April 2001, the Beth Johnson Foundation (BJF)

established the Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CIP) and, since that time, has led intergenerational work in the UK and become internationally recognised and influential in this field. In 2002, the Foundation identified over 300 intergenerational programmes in England and Wales (Granville, 2002) and the Centre for Intergenerational Practice now supports approximately 1200 organisations, either delivering or developing intergenerational projects (Hatton-Yeo, 2008). However, whilst intergenerational activities and programmes have been proliferating, very few specific centres with an 'intergenerational focus' operate in the UK (Vegeris & Campbell-Barr, 2007).

As a result of their cumulative experience and expertise, the CIP were therefore consulted when the Greater London Authority (GLA), in partnership with the London Development Agency (LDA), decided to launch a competition to establish the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre. On Friday July 20th 2007, the GLA issued a press release signalling the then Mayor of London's plans to support a new centre and inviting bids. From fourteen applicants, the London Borough of Merton was successful in being awarded the project in February 2008 and the aim was to complete and open the Centre in Oct/Nov 2009. The Centre, as envisaged, was designed to respond to the growing body of research evidence concerning the benefits of such developments in addressing priority policy areas around active citizenship and community safety, thereby helping to build more cooperative, inclusive, and sustainable communities (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2006; Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), 2005; Pain, 2005). Promoting communication and engaging citizens across the generations, was also

identified as crucial to improve economic, social and environmental well-being at local levels. The Centre was thus meant to provide a one-stop resource of shared services and facilities for older people, children and younger people, as well as families.

At the same time, the Beth Johnson Foundation in partnership with the Centre for Social Gerontology at Keele University, were successful in their bid to the Economic and Social Research Council for a CASE PhD studentship to research this new and potentially innovative project. As a consequence, I was then able to extend my earlier work for my Masters dissertation and apply it to the study I report on here in this thesis.

The original research aims and objectives for the study as set out in the bid were fourfold. As the first study of its kind in the UK, it sought to:

- Tell the story of this unique development in the context of a national policy agenda which is now beginning to recognise the potential benefits of intergenerational practice (ODPM, 2006; DWP, 2005).
- Consolidate what is currently a body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the benefits of intergenerational practice into a more systematic and critical review of the research literature (Bernard, 2006; Granville, 2002; Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako, 2000).

- Build on the findings of research already undertaken on the impacts and benefits of shared-site intergenerational centres around the world (Jarrott and Bruno, 2007; Generations United, 2005b; Thang, 2001) to assist the developers of the London centre to establish baseline measures and appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools which can be used to assess progress and change over time (Bernard and Ellis, 2004).
- Employ a mix of both conventional and more innovative qualitative, visual and observation research methods to explore what involvement in the intergenerational centre means to key players, and what working 'intergenerationally' actually entails.

As will be shown later in the thesis, these original aims and objectives underwent some modifications. Essentially however, the study was meant to be *applied* and *useful* to practitioners, policy makers and researchers alike whilst being informed by, and remaining couched within, the existing theoretical and research literature. As a study funded through a CASE studentship, it also required me to spend periods of time (placements) at the University's partner organisation i.e. the Beth Johnson Foundation, and for the Foundation to provide an associate supervisor. This arrangement facilitated my induction to the borough and the Centre; helped me with access to the field, to relevant documentation (notably those relating to the selected London borough's overarching policy objectives) and to potential research participants; and has ensured a ready-made avenue for feeding back

messages arising from the research to relevant policy-makers within the borough and, where appropriate, other local agencies.

The study was also designed to build on the methodological expertise of the academic supervisors. It therefore involved a mixed methods approach encompassing documentary and policy analysis, together with the development of rigorous quantitative and qualitative evaluation and monitoring tools. As noted in the original application, it was to include:

- **A critical review of the existing research and policy literature** on intergenerational practice in general; the benefits or otherwise of intergenerational centres; and the development of UK policy addressing older people, children and young people, and community cohesion.
- **Documentary analysis** to trace the origins and development of the Centre and to illuminate the processes and decision-making behind its establishment. This was to draw on a range of documents provided by the CIP, GLA/LDA and the successful borough.
- **In-depth qualitative interviews** with up to 20 key players to explore their expectations and their proposed strategies for intergenerational communication and participation. All interviews were to be digitally recorded and transcribed. Analysis was to be undertaken using relevant software, with the focus on conducting a detailed thematic analysis.

- **Focus group interviews:** time and Centre developments permitting, up to six co-facilitated focus groups were to be undertaken with Centre participants and with residents in the surrounding area to explore both their reactions to, and the impact they feel the Centre had (or might have) on their community.
- **Development of a visual history** of the Centre's genesis and on-going recordings of selected Centre activities. The intention was to use this data to help explore communication between generations, and how staff/facilitators work 'intergenerationally'.
- **The development of monitoring and evaluation tools** in co-operation with Centre staff and participants to establish baseline information about who the Centre reached in its first months/years of operation.

It was also intended that the study would draw on, and adapt learning from, North American and European developments in order to address not only staple evaluative questions such as 'what works?', but also to examine intellectually challenging questions around what involvement in intergenerational activities actually means to participants and the wider community. By taking place simultaneously with the development of the Centre, the study also offered the opportunity to address the often-made criticisms of such work that (a) lament that evaluative research is frequently undertaken 'after the event', and (b) that such research is often poorly thought-out and anecdotal in nature. By working alongside the developers and staff as the Centre developed over its initial months, it was

hoped that research-mindedness might also become embedded in the day-to-day practices of staff. The research and the doctoral thesis arising from this study therefore has the potential to offer insights into the impact of such interventions at individual, community and policy levels and to contribute to the emerging evidence base around intergenerational practice.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Following on from this Introduction, the thesis is organised into nine further chapters as detailed here.

Together, Chapters 2 and 3 set the context for the whole study by reviewing and critiquing the research literature and policy background to intergenerational practice in general, and IGSSs in particular. **Chapter 2** looks at terminology and the theoretical perspectives which have been adopted to research and evaluate intergenerational practice and IGSSs. I begin by exploring terms and definitions in order to clarify how intergenerational practice has been defined and used. I then look at the more recent development of IGSSs and at how that term is defined. This is followed by an examination of a number of key theoretical perspectives which have informed my own study as they relate to intergenerational relationships and to the environments and settings within which those relationships take place. Even though I argue later in the thesis that policy and practice have led theory development (and research) in the intergenerational field, I feel it is important to set out early on the theoretical basis of my study as it arises from this overview.

Chapter 3 complements Chapter 2 by exploring the research, policy and practice literature. Here, I argue that practice and policy developments have paved the way for research interest in intergenerational practice. Consequently, I begin this chapter by reviewing the historical development of intergenerational practice and then consider IGSSs as one element of this overall field. I then turn to policy. Whilst the focus of this historical discussion is on the UK I refer, where appropriate, to allied developments notably in North America and in Europe. An understanding of policy and policy drivers is important for appreciating what shaped the initial interest in, and impetus for, creating the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre. It also provides the background for my later chapter detailing the history and development of the Centre itself. A review of the research around intergenerational practice and IGSSs completes this chapter. Arising out of the considerations in Chapters 2 and 3, I conclude by setting out the research questions which have framed the study and which evolved from the original aims and objectives as set out in the bid to fund the studentship (see page above).

Chapters 4 and 5 provide an account of the methodology and methods which were used in the study. In **Chapter 4**, I explain the rationale for my chosen research design. Here, I reflect back on the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 and provide a basis for the approach and methods I chose. I discuss how using a qualitative research strategy resonates with the aims of my study and explain my choice of an approach that combines a case study method with ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews. I explore the ethical issues attendant on a study of this nature and introduce the thematic framework used for my analysis.

Chapter 5 then provides an account of how the research design was put into action. I detail the various methods I used to generate data and provide a chronology of the fieldwork I undertook. This includes a description of work done prior to the main fieldwork, how access to gatekeepers was negotiated throughout the study, and my pilot work. I then outline the procedures I used to collect a range of pertinent documents during the planning phase of the Centre; the unstructured observations of stakeholder meetings and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders I completed; as well as the process of creating and implementing the schedule I used for observing activities and people in the Centre during its opening months. This chapter also explains how I addressed the ethical considerations raised by the study and concludes with a consideration of how I transcribed, coded and analysed my data sets.

Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 present the findings from this study. Drawing on a range of documentary materials, **Chapter 6** provides a context for the other three findings chapters by looking at the London Development Agency's vision for an intergenerational centre; at the origins of this vision; and at how the bid process was framed. I then turn to look at the bidding process itself; at how the chosen borough of Merton proposed to develop the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre; and also present a brief socio-demographic profile of the borough.

Chapters 7, 8 and 9 consider, in turn, the development, design and delivery of the Centre. In **Chapter 7**, I explore the ways in which key stakeholders in Merton proposed to develop the Centre. This chapter looks at how they took the LDA's original vision and translated this into a strategy for the Centre, and then at how that strategy was to be operationalised. I show how examples of existing best practice and research were – or were not - utilised by the developers, and analyse the extent to which potential users were involved – or not - in the development of the Centre.

Chapter 8 switches attention to an analysis of how the design of the Centre – this purpose-built environment - affected behaviours and interactions between the generations. As was highlighted in the literature review, a critical issue within the intergenerational field is a lack of attention to how the built environment plays a crucial role in promoting or inhibiting intergenerational engagement. Through observing the Centre as it was built and developed, and through my use of an observation schedule to monitor how the Centre and its activities were used and by whom, I have been able to explore in detail the role of this new purpose-built environment in promoting or inhibiting engagement between the generations.

In **Chapter 9**, I go on to examine whether the Centre actually delivered the LDA's original vision and whether it met the expectations of key stakeholders once it opened its doors and people were able to make practical use of it. This chapter looks at how the Centre promoted its activities and communicated with potential

users; at how its activities were managed and facilitated; and at what use the different generations actually made of it. Throughout all these four findings chapters, the analysis and presentation is supported by quotations from documents and from research participants and, where appropriate, by images taken as part of the visual record of the Centre's development.

Chapter 10 draws together the findings with the earlier review of research, policy and practice into a discussion and conclusion. Here I revisit my research questions and consider the extent to which they have been answered or not through the analysis and presentation of my data and findings. I reflect on how the processes involved in the development of the Centre have influenced how it is used (and by whom), and discuss how the design of the social and built environment promotes or inhibits interaction between the generations. I also highlight the limitations of my research, discuss the contribution this study has made to the body of knowledge about intergenerational practice, and make recommendations about the development of IGSSs as well as some suggestions for future research in this field.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the reader with an introduction to the study of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre. It has shown how my personal and professional experiences led to my interest in intergenerational practice and how I came to be undertaking this study. It has also outlined the background and context

to the study – both practically in terms of the origins of the initiative which led to the Centre’s development, and academically in terms of the parameters and research aims and objectives of the original studentship. Having concluded the chapter by outlining the structure of the thesis, I turn now to the first of my literature review chapters.

Chapter 2

Intergenerational Practice and Intergenerational Shared Sites: Definitions, Terms and Theories

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this, and the next chapter, is to assess and evaluate research, policy and practice evidence relating to intergenerational practice in general and the development of intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs) in particular. I begin this chapter by focussing on terms and definitions before examining a number of key theoretical perspectives. Theory is an important underpinning to research, policy and practice although, as Kuehne (2003a) has argued, it is not often used very extensively in the intergenerational field. This first review chapter thus provides an indication of the key theoretical perspectives which have informed my own study and begins the task of helping make the case for the study design I adopted.

2.2.1 Defining Intergenerational Practice

The concept of intergenerational practice is not new, but is historically embedded in the “familial and patriarchal relationships of different cultures” (Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako, 2000: 12). Many elements of intergenerational practice have been around for decades, but it was not until the 1980s that it was recognised as being particularly relevant to addressing a variety of social problems and issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, low self-esteem and isolation that were affecting two of the most vulnerable population groups (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2011) – namely older and younger people. From the 1990s onwards, the scope of

intergenerational programmes altered to include the rejuvenation of local communities through various action programmes. According to Hatton-Yeo (2008), intergenerational programming had increased dramatically across Europe by the end of the 1990s in response to such issues as the integration of immigrants, the need to enhance social inclusion and active ageing, and the perception of the breakdown of familial solidarity. By the beginning of the 21st century, intergenerational practice was progressively seen as a way of addressing tensions between the generations and varied projects were being established internationally (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2011).

As intergenerational practice has evolved as a field, so there has been debate and discussion about how it is defined, structured and approached. Twenty years ago, the National Council on Aging in the United States defined intergenerational programmes as: “activities or programs that increase cooperation, interaction or exchange between any two generations” (Kaplan et al., 2007, p. 83). Since then, there has been significant change and growth in the volume and diversity of programmes. Many studies have primarily focused on how programme participants benefit from involvement in intergenerational relationships. More recently, attention has been drawn to the potential of such programmes to build cohesive communities and promote civic engagement. Kaplan et al. (2007) suggest that this has been accompanied by a conceptual shift in how intergenerational practice is defined and understood with a move away from a singular emphasis on structured programmes of intervention, to encompass a wider emphasis on the cultural and communal practices involved in bringing older

adults and younger people together. This shift resonates with UK developments, as intergenerational practice has become increasingly well established here too.

Twenty-five years ago, intergenerational practice in the UK was about younger people 'doing things to/for' older adults with minimal contact between the generations (Bernard, 2006). Early projects were school-based, mainly focusing on mentoring schemes. Today, intergenerational practice is based much more on exchange and reciprocity, where younger people and older adults are brought together to engage in mutually rewarding activities (Bernard, 2006). Accordingly, intergenerational practice is no longer limited to individual participants and how they benefit, but is now equally applicable to intergenerational relationships in the wider community. More programmes are recognising this shift and are increasingly concerned with such outcomes as the creation of social capital; the potential to develop the capacity of communities; the diversification of volunteering; and the greater involvement of educational institutions in their communities (4children, 2008; Springate et al., 2008).

However, this focus on outcomes as a way of defining intergenerational practice, whilst useful, has been criticised for failing to acknowledge that outcomes may accrue to just one generation rather than the other and that they may well be influenced by characteristics such as age, class, income, gender and so on (Mannion, 2012). Springate and colleagues (2008) argue the need for greater clarity around the definition of intergenerational practice, and Mannion (2012: 388) has recently called for "a more nuanced approach to saying what is distinctive about intergenerational practice". Mannion (2012: 396) goes on to make the case

for understanding intergenerational practice as being, “all-age, reciprocal and multigenerational” but as a prelude to offering an expanded definition of intergenerational education, rather than intergenerational practice per se.

Whilst accepting that there is no single agreed definition of intergenerational practice and that it is still a contested area requiring greater attention, for the purposes of this study, I have adopted the following definition which can be found on the website of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice:

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities. Intergenerational practice is inclusive, building on the positive resources that the young and old have to offer each other and those around them. (Centre for Intergenerational Practice, 2002).

2.2.2 Defining Intergenerational Shared Sites

Many changes in society, such as increased geographic mobility and improved technological advances, have led to generations frequently becoming segregated from one another - especially young people and older adults (Hatton-Yeo & Ohsako, 2000). Naturally occurring opportunities for exchange and interaction between the generations are also not as prevalent in contemporary society as they perhaps once were. This means that young people and older adults are now more likely to spend a significant amount of their time in age segregated settings

(Johnson and Bytheway, 1994). Children often spend their days in school and/or childcare centres, younger people with their friends, and many older adults in age-isolated facilities such as senior centres or retirement homes/communities (Johnson and Bytheway, 1994). This viewpoint is reiterated in a survey of European citizens who were asked their opinions about existing relations between the young and the old (European Commission, 2009). The survey found that the majority of citizens felt there were insufficient opportunities for older and younger people to meet and work together, via associations and local community initiatives (European Commission, 2009). Yet, as will be seen in the next chapter, it has been suggested that both younger people and older adults thrive when resources are used to bring the generations together rather than separate them (Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007; Generations United, 2006, 2005a). IGSSs have therefore been promoted as a means of addressing some of the negative social implications of an increasingly age-segregated society (Generations United, 2005).

It is claimed by some commentators that IGSSs are unique as they present opportunities for frequent, structured and informal activities and have the potential to establish an age-integrated community that can meet the diverse needs of its members (Hayes, 2003). The North American model of IGSSs is arguably the most prevalent (having been around the longest) and is based primarily on a physically constructed shared site, in contrast with more naturally occurring shared sites such as public spaces or parks, for example. In North America, this single model typically consists of a day-care facility for children based within an older adults' long term care facility (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001).

However, the emergence and growth of IGSSs over the past 20 years has resulted in a wide variety of models being established. Some fifteen years ago, the American Association of Retired People (Goyer and Zuses, 1998) released the results of their survey of IGSSs, which detailed the range of shared site programme possibilities and reported the most common programmes in existence. Since then, there have been very few (systematic) international reviews of the literature available on these programmes (Melville, 2009; Jarrott and Bruno, 2007) and, as with intergenerational practice, understandings of what IGSSs are vary across studies and in the research and practice literature. For the most part, an early and well-known definition of an intergenerational shared site used by AARP - “programs in which multiple generations receive ongoing services and/or programming at the same site, and generally interact through planned and/or informal intergenerational activities” is still used (1998, p. v). However, in a recent special issue of the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* on shared sites, the guest editor argues that this original definition is limited in that it does not “necessarily apply across all countries and cultures” (Jarrott, 2011: 344).

Again, whilst acknowledging that there is no agreed definition of IGSSs – and because of the, as yet, lack of UK work on them - I have adopted the following North American definition to anchor my study:

Intergenerational shared sites are programs in which children and/or youth and older adults participate in ongoing services and/or programming concurrently at the same site (or on the same campus within close proximity), and where participants interact during regularly scheduled,

planned intergenerational activities, as well as through informal encounters.

(Generations United, 2002: 13)

Having provided a brief overview of how intergenerational practice and IGSSs are defined and which definitions I am using to frame my study, I turn next to an examination of the theoretical perspectives which have informed my work.

2.3 Theoretical Considerations

Kuehne (2003a, 2003b), in her seminal papers in the very first volume of the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, identified more than 15 theoretical approaches that can be effectively applied to intergenerational programme development, research and evaluation. It would be impossible to review all of these approaches, so my intention here is to focus on those of particular relevance to my study. To do this, I consider theoretical perspectives in terms of two key areas: those relating to intergenerational relationships and those relating to environment.

It is also important to note that a number of researchers and commentators have alerted us to the fact that without theory, phenomena such as intergenerational practice or relationships cannot be fully understood (Jarrott, 2011; VanderVen, 2011, 2004; Bernard, 2006; Kuehne, 2003a; Granville, 2002). Likewise, it is important to root practice in theory (Lawrence-Jacobson, 2006) as it can help us in determining the key aims of intergenerational projects and programmes, as well as recognise and clarify what is occurring over the course of a project or programme (Bernard, 2006). Jarrott (2011:40) for example, suggests that “specific theories

can inform programming and evaluation, providing insight to the mechanisms by which a program is successful or unsuccessful". Additionally, theory-based knowledge is of relevance to policy makers and grant funders concerned with the sustainability of intergenerational programmes over an extended period of time (Kuehne, 2003a).

2.3.1 Intergenerational relationships

"The distinctive feature of intergenerational work is the combination of two people at different phases of development that will interact with each other, usually in a way of involving others, in various situations and contexts, with the expectation of a relationship" (VanderVen, 2011: 30).

The main rationale used to justify intergenerational programme initiatives has traditionally been derived from human development theory, focussing on the interaction itself and on the psychosocial and educational benefits for older and younger participants (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001; Ward, 1999). For example, Newman et al. (1997: 4) claim that both "common sense" and a significant amount of empirical data suggest that coupling older and younger adults together in various contexts and activities will result in "positive developmental benefits". Similarly, Fox and Giles (1993) claim that some child development theorists (i.e. Piaget, Erikson, Bowlby, Vygotsky and Bronfenbrenner) highlight the connections between the cognitive and affective aspects of growth. Likewise, key concepts associated with older adult development theorists (i.e. Havighurst, Gould and

Levinson, Erikson and Kohlberg) indicate that an older adult's ability to remain active and socially connected to others is critical to sustaining physiological, emotional, and psychological functioning (Newman et al., 1997).

One of the best known theorists in this regard is Erik Erikson and Eriksonian theory which has consistently been used as a frame of reference in intergenerational practice (Jarrott, 2011; VanderVen, 2011; Graves and Larkin, 2006; Kuehne, 2003b). It has been suggested that well-known features of Erikson's theory - mainly Erikson's stages of psychosocial development, could be used as a way to further explore the roles intergenerational relationships can play in individual development and for its value for understanding the nature of life course development and how people may relate to one another intergenerationally (VanderVen, 2011). More specifically, it has been suggested that Erikson's seventh stage of psychosocial development - generativity vs. stagnation - fits well with an intergenerational approach as it lays emphasis on older adults fulfilling their own developmental needs (Kuehne, 2003a).

Other researchers have made use of contact theory to explore relations between different generations (Pettigrew, 1998; Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Allport, 1954). In his explanation of contact theory, Allport (1954) states that under appropriate conditions interpersonal contact can be an effective method for reducing prejudice or discrimination between age groups and specifies four key conditions necessary for optimal contact: equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; the support of authorities, and law or custom. While some research supports this hypothesis, other research has highlighted various

problems and limitations with Allport's work – mainly that it does not address process, only predicts when possible contact effects will occur (Pettigrew, 1998). Following on from Allport's initial formulation, Pettigrew's Intergroup Contact Theory (1998: 70) proposes four interrelated processes that operate through contact: learning about the outgroup; changing behaviour; generating affective ties and ingroup reappraisal. It also emphasises different outcomes for different stages of contact and highlights the fact that individual differences and societal norms can shape intergroup contact effects. Moreover, Pettigrew (1998:76) recommends that while past work in the field has focused mainly on short-term contact, optimal intergroup contact needs time and opportunities for cross-group friendships to develop fully.

According to Jarrott and Bruno (2007), applying contact theory to intergenerational practice can increase the opportunity for successful intergenerational interactions by providing insight into the success of the IGSS model and can provide a framework for programmes that promote personhood and well-being of participants through contact. More specifically, it has been argued that contact theory has guided the development and evaluation of many classroom-based programmes in which older adults act as mentors (Jarrott, 2011:40).

Similarly, Statham (2009) suggests that a significant number of intergenerational programmes have been based on the premise of contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998, 1997; Allport, 1954) which brings younger and older adults together to promote interaction to facilitate positive attitudinal change between the generations. Nevertheless, Statham (2009: 476) warns that more thought needs to be given to

the nature of intergenerational programme activities “to prevent the reinforcement of existing negative intergenerational attitudes”. More specifically, Fox and Giles (1993: 426) argue that it is not sufficient to research quantity of contact alone, but that quality of contact – subjectively rated by participants – is equally as important when exploring changes in attitude. As a result, Fox and Giles (1993) have developed the Intergenerational Contact Model, based on the notion that intergenerational exchanges are both ‘intergroup’ and ‘intercultural’ in nature. More specifically, this model takes into account other important variables such as frequency of contact, level of participant intimacy, relative status of participants, and duration of the intergenerational contact. In the case of IGSSs, contact theory specifies conditions needed for positive intergroup relationships and has been supported by research in a variety of settings, including intergenerational ones (Pettigrew, 1998).

Not all intergenerational contact may lead to positive outcomes and, in an overview of intergenerational programmes in the UK, Statham (2009) notes other theories which have been offered to help explain the cause of intergenerational conflict or negative attitudes, the main ones identified by Pinquart et al (2000: 525) as critical: ‘realistic intergroup conflict’, ‘social identity’ and ‘deficit of intergenerational contact’ theory. More specifically - with reference to intergenerational practice, it has been suggested that conflict may arise as result of a “divergence of goals between different age groups” (Pinquart et al., 2000: 526). Social identity theory also shows how the negative attitudes of one group towards another may result in intergroup conflict, while the deficit of intergenerational contact theory claims that negative ageist stereotyping and

intergenerational conflict are a result of inadequate social intergroup contact (Pinquart et al., 2000). For example, Pain (2005) and Peace et al (2007) illustrate the potential for such conflict by highlighting the competition for public space between younger and older adults within local communities.

However one views intergenerational relations, these take place against the backdrop of the life course. Indeed, life course perspectives are an important corollary to theories which emphasise individual/developmental aspects, and are offered as a valuable way of exploring how socio-economic conditions and the policy agenda can also influence interactions between the generations (Biggs and Lowenstein, 2011; Seedsman, 2006; Settersten, 2003). Furthermore, the life course perspective has been proposed as an important means for exploring how intergenerational solidarity may be altered by the presence or absence of policy initiatives that support generations throughout the life course. For instance, Roodin (2004) focuses on the significance of adopting this perspective when developing intergenerational programmes. Roodin (2004) goes on to explain as certain cultures value specific forms of exchange (i.e. traditional grandparent-grandchild relations support elders to live longer and plays a role in the family and workplace), key positions in the life course have relevance to intergenerational practice. It is clear that some developmental fields are emphasised over others in certain cultures and in certain academic disciplines. Some fields of study highlight particular transitions in the life span (marriage, birth) while others emphasise other distinct periods (care of aging parents, entry into the workforce). Consequently, it has been argued that the life course perspective offers a valuable framework for the study of intergenerational relations as it does not over emphasise one period

or specific event over another, nor does it stress the importance of one field of study over another (Roodin, 2004; VanderVen, 1999). Finally, a diversity of perspectives across the life span is needed to understand the value of intergenerational programmes, their structure, and how best to design appropriate research to determine their effectiveness and meaning (Roodin, 2004: 217).

2.3.2 Environmental perspectives

The second theoretical area which is key to my doctoral study concerns the environment and, specifically, people's relationships with their environment. The literature has clearly demonstrated that one of the critical issues emerging within the intergenerational field is a lack of attention to how the built environment plays a crucial role in influencing intergenerational interaction (Larkin et al., 2010; Melville, 2009; Jarrot et al., 2008; Turner, 2005; Steining, 2002; Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001; Thang, 2001). As Mannion (2012: 391) notes: 'interpersonal relations are always located in a place' and classic person-environment theory (Lawton, 1954) and its subsequent developments have much to offer the study of intergenerational practice. Over the past four decades the environmental context of ageing has come to play an important role in gerontological theory, research and practice. Person-environment theories – and what has become known as environmental gerontology - take into account the environmental processes that are central to individual interaction, with physical and social environments often having interdependent effects (Salari, 2002).

The birth of environmental gerontology has been linked to contributions by Lewin (1946, 1943) in the 1930s and 40s and Kleemeier (1956) in the 1950s which

promoted the view that behaviour should be regarded as a function of the person *and* the environment (Wahl and Weisman, 2003). Following on from that, the 1950s and 60s brought important learning theories in psychology and education that attributed much to the influence of environment in all stages of human development. It was not until the late 1960s and early 70s that old age became “an attractive area for early work in this field due to assumed vulnerability of the ageing organism to environmental demands as well as the existence of specially designed environments for ageing people” (Peace et al., 2006: 212). Such research influenced the development of ecological theories of ageing later in the 20th century. For example, Lawton and Nahemow (1973) introduced the press – competence model.

The work of Lawton and colleagues focused exclusively on behaviour and well-being; the primary view that human behaviour and function result from the competencies of the individual, the demands or “press” of the environment, and the interaction or adaptation of the person to the environment. Moreover, the relationship between individual competency and the environment is viewed as a dynamic process - both the press of environments and levels of individual competencies change as part of the process of aging. As a result, much empirical work in environmental gerontology, as well as more practical work in relation to housing adaptations and designing institutions for the aged follows this model (Peace et al., 2006; Wahl and Weisman, 2003). A parallel development has been the person-environment fit model which underlines the role of motivation and personal needs rather than competence within person-environment processes (Peace et al., 2006: 217). Another theoretical perspective – social ecology, also

assumes close links between physical surroundings and the social behaviours of people acting within these settings.

From the 1980s onwards, a new generation of environmental gerontologists have emerged with a more sophisticated perspective and development of the person-environment fit, theory/model to look at different components of the environment (Rowles and Bernard, 2013). For example, Wahl and Lang (2004) have argued for greater integration of the social component of environment, Iwarsson (2004) has developed the person-environment-activity model and Cutchin (2003) has established a transactional perspective which focuses on how people develop “place integration” within the environments of their life over time (Rowles and Bernard, 2013). Moreover, Peace and her colleagues have provided new perspectives on the role of environment in shaping identity in later life (Peace, Holland, & Kellaher, 2006; 2005) and Chaudhury (2008; Benyamin, Chaudhury, and Tofle; 2003) has focused on the role of residential environments in the care of people with dementia. Lastly, Evans (2009) has provided much needed vision and understanding of the role of the environment in social well-being as well as the experience of community in retirement communities.

To sum up, the brief history of environmental gerontology has shown that the relationship between context and individual behaviour offers a wide spectrum of situations to explore. Much research has focused on interactions within micro, age-segregated environments such as specialised accommodation for frail older adults. However, there has been an increase and recognised growing need in the field to consider older adults’ engagement with and attachment to age-integrated

communities – macro environments in terms of urbanity, rurality and levels of amenity and deprivation (Peace et al., 2006: 217). As such, researchers such as Peace et al. (2006) suggest a better integration of a micro and macro level of analysis for future work in the field of environmental gerontology. Therefore, more recent research has focused on the use of different public spaces in urban areas that are shared by many generations. For example, Holland et al., (2007) have explored how people use public spaces and analysed how social interactions vary by age, gender or place. More specifically, Kaplan et al., (2007) have demonstrated their interest in developing intergenerational settings where the physical environment is designed to accommodate the physical and psychological needs of intergenerational participants. Therefore, a bridge between the micro and macro aspects of our environments is becoming evident and an interest in exploring public/shared spaces/places that are IGSSs is increasing.

2.4 Theoretical Approaches: A Critique

Having argued for the importance of theory to understanding intergenerational practice and intergenerational relations, it is perhaps surprising that, over the past 20 years, theory has not been a significant part of much of the intergenerational literature, either as a structure for the design of projects and programming, or as an aid to explaining the findings of projects (Bernard, 2006; Kuehne, 2003a). A decade ago, Granville (2002: 1) fittingly summarised the then lack of theory in intergenerational practice in the UK by stating that, “without further research and evaluation it is not possible to build a conceptual framework that explains in a rigorous fashion whether intergenerational practice achieves what it claims and if so, why”. Compared to the rapidly growing number and variety of intergenerational

programmes, there is still a limited number of documented research studies based on theoretical frameworks (Kuehne, 2003a) that can “guide what we do, and help explain to others why what we do is important” (Bernard, 2006: 12).

This lack of theory is also found on an international scale. Hatton-Yeo & Ohsako (2000:5) observed that while intergenerational practice was “being developed in a diverse and wide range of practical ways” in many countries, it was being done so from a limited theoretical or conceptual basis in most cases. In her more recent content analysis of evaluation research of intergenerational programmes, Jarrott (2011: 44) found that authors referred to one or more theories that informed their research in only 35% of the studies she reviewed, while 39% made no reference to theory at all. With respect to IGSSs, my own review of this literature (Melville, 2009) found that, out of a total of 116 articles, only 24% used or adapted existing theories, and only 5% proposed the development of new theory as one way forward.

In addition to a persistent lack of theory in much work on intergenerational practice, the usefulness of developmental theory in particular was questioned early on by some commentators. VanderVen (1999) for example, argued over 20 years ago that developmental theory was too narrow a theoretical focus to help understand intergenerational relations. She argued that stage or phase theories result in too linear an approach which focuses on common trajectories for all individuals in a certain age group and discounts multiple pathways to development and other important contextual factors. Despite the fact that there are many theories of life span development, Erikson seems to be the predominant theorist

drawn upon in the intergenerational literature, to the exclusion of others (VanderVen, 1999).

An associated problem that has been emphasised in the literature is the fact that many contemporary theories of development do not address the period we might term old-old age (VanderVen, 1999). VanderVen (1999: 35) also highlights the 'cultural limitations' of much developmental theory arguing that, "today's post-modern perspective stresses that any theory is highly situated in and determined by the particular cultural context existing at the time of its creation" and must acknowledge "the possible impact of cultural and social values on individual functioning/behaviour".

Accordingly, VanderVen (2011, 1999) and others (Kuehne, 2003b; Newman and Smith, 1997) have offered suggestions for amendments to current theories of human development that would give equal weighting to the developmental needs of both members of an intergenerational dyad. Recommendations have included greater integration of child development theories with life course theories so that developmental themes and trajectories across the life course would receive balanced consideration (VanderVen, 2004). Kuehne (2003a) suggests that such an integrated theory could fit with the extended life span that Western societies are experiencing; provide for enhanced differentiation of older adults; enable consideration of intergenerational programme dyads and their interactions more fully; focus on development as a dynamic process rather than a linear one; and include post-modernist concerns such as the role of power in society. For VanderVen (2004), this new approach is one 'in which intergenerational practice is

more dynamic (nonlinear), recursive, constructivist, socially suited, and informed by postmodern theories of power and other social identifiers such as gender' (Mannion, 2012: 388).

Allied with this, post-modern perspectives advocate that participants should be involved in all phases of intergenerational programme design, implementation and evaluation (VanderVen, 2004). A focus on the significance of the relationship between intergenerational participants and programmers can influence how younger and older individuals are matched, rather than simply focussing on the outcomes of each activity (VanderVen, 2004). This would also help address Kuehne's (2003a: 147) warning that there are still too many atheoretical studies that report solely on "intergenerational research questions or program evaluations without the benefit of a conceptual foundation".

In summary, many reviews of the intergenerational research field (Jarrott, 2011; Melville, 2009; Jarrott, 2005; Granville, 2002; Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001) have suggested that the limited application of theoretical frameworks has not been keeping pace with the increasing quality and diversity of intergenerational programmes themselves. As a result, the field lacks the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that will enable it to continue to develop as both a discipline and a practice. There is a need for better use of existing theoretical frameworks, for the continued development of theory and concepts and, for some commentators, for the intergenerational field to develop its own frameworks and own identity (VanderVen, 2011). With these observations in mind, I conclude this chapter by outlining my own theoretical approach to my study.

2.5 Conclusion: My Theoretical Approach

If we seek to understand the meaning and significance behind intergenerational relationships as they develop in the context of a new purpose-built intergenerational centre, then a theoretical approach is required which explores both the nature of the interaction between the different generations and considers the environmental factors that may influence such interactions. For the purposes of this study, I therefore intend to build upon the fundamental principles of traditional contact theory, by combining it with elements of environmental gerontology and social ecology (Peace et al., 2006). My theoretical approach is predicated on the notion that the types of environment which the generations occupy form the context for potential social interaction. As a result, the aim is to focus on the interaction between person and environment, rather than on one or the other exclusively and to explore how the design and use of a physical environment, such as the Centre, promotes or inhibits the interactions taking place within it. I am also concerned with what involvement in the development of the Centre means to key players involved with the project. This suggests that power relationships, as well as concepts of agency and personal empowerment, are also important and will assist me to explore and critically question who the Centre was developed for and how the development process sought to involve, or not, those whom it was meant to serve.

It has been suggested that a distinctive feature of intergenerational work is “the combination of two people at different phases of development that will interact with each other; usually in a way involving others, in various situations and contexts, with the expectation of a relationship” (VanderVen, 2011: 30). Fox and Giles

(1993) have also warned against a Pollyanna approach to intergenerational contact and suggest we do not assume that mere contact between younger and older adults will result in the positive benefit of mutual understanding and positive attitude change. With this in mind, instead of simply researching the personal and developmental characteristics of individual members of an intergenerational dyad, my aim is to explore the dynamic(s) of this relationship. My study is not simply about measuring contact between the generations, but is about uncovering the nature and type of interaction or contact. Contact theory therefore offers one way of exploring the conditions under which interaction between the generations may be fostered or inhibited in the new purpose-built Centre.

That said, it is also important to examine factors that may influence the nature and type of contact between the generations using the Centre. Here, the physical environment is crucial as the context within which such contact may occur. VanderVen (1999: 33) argues convincingly that intergenerational theory needs to account for the role of environmental variables in shaping behaviour. Consequently, my theoretical approach is also rooted in environmental gerontology and its focus on the built and social environments, on the attachment of (older) people to places, and on how spaces are used, organised and structured (Holland et al., 2007). I draw here on social ecology concepts and on person-environment fit models, both of which assume close links between physical surroundings and the social behaviours of people acting within these settings (Peace et al., 2006). More specifically, I draw on recent developments which emphasise the role of motivation and personal needs rather than simply stressing competence within person-environment processes. The 'transactional' perspective

offers a method of analysing the two-way relationship in which the environment both shapes and symbolises the interactions which take place in it, and within which individuals set different goals and purposes for spending time in, and/or passing through it (Southwell, 2007).

In conclusion, and in order to frame my own study, I have therefore sought to combine elements of traditional contact theories with theories addressing the impact of the 'environment' on behaviour and relationships. However, before looking at how I operationalized this approach in my fieldwork, I turn in the next chapter to a consideration of the existing research, policy and practice around intergenerational practice and IGSSs.

Chapter 3

Intergenerational Practice and Intergenerational Shared Sites: Practice, Policy and Research

3.1 Introduction

As outlined in the introductory chapter, one of the main aims of this study is to 'tell the story' of the development of a unique purpose-built intergenerational centre in the context of a national policy agenda which is now beginning to recognise the potential benefits of intergenerational practice. Accordingly, this chapter provides: a brief history of developments in intergenerational practice over the past 20 years, an account of how policy has begun to recognise this field as an important way of addressing key societal concerns and a review of the research around intergenerational practice in general and intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs) in particular. The chapter concludes by setting out the research questions which have framed my study.

3.2 Intergenerational Practice and Shared Site Developments

Although we can date the emergence of intergenerational practice in the UK to the 1980s, it was not until 2000 that a notable expansion took place. Promotion at an international level, mainly as a result of the United Nations Plan of Action on Ageing, added considerable impetus to developments in the UK (Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako, 2000) and, over the past decade, intergenerational activities and programmes have become increasingly well established. Leading the way on this

front is the Beth Johnson Foundation which, in 2002, identified 300 programmes in England and Wales (Granville, 2002). Today, the Foundation's Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CIP) supports over 1200 organisations in either delivering or developing intergenerational projects (Hatton-Yeo, 2008). An England-wide regional network provides a valuable opportunity for members to promote their work, share information, exchange views and debate issues, and is mirrored by similar networks supported by the CIP in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Organisations such as Age UK and the National Youth Agency have also become increasingly interested in adopting an intergenerational approach to their work and have drawn on, and utilised the expertise available through, the CIP (National Youth Agency, 2008; Age Concern, 2007).

In an attempt to foster international links and map current practices and research, the UK has also collaborated in a number of international intergenerational partnerships. For example, the Beth Johnson Foundation is the UK founding member and host of the International Consortium of Intergenerational Programmes (ICIP) - the only organisation focussed solely on promoting intergenerational work from a global perspective (Intergenerational Consortium for Intergenerational Programmes, 2009). The UK has also been included as a partner in a range of European projects. Most recently, through the Beth Johnson Foundation, the UK became the founding member and host of Europe's first learning network dedicated to intergenerational learning. The European Map of Intergenerational Learning (EMIL) is an innovative project highlighting intergenerational learning taking place across Europe. It uses the existing expertise of partner organisations already working in the field to create a learning

network for others involved in intergenerational programmes (European Map of Intergenerational Learning, 2009).

Involvement in these kinds of networks and partnerships has provided practitioners in the UK with: examples of best practice; access to guidelines on dissemination and on topic areas such as later life learning in intergenerational settings; ideas for planning and implementing intergenerational projects; and guidance on mainstreaming intergenerational learning activities (EAGLE, 2008; IANUS, 2009; MATES 2009). This can be seen as part of a wider effort to professionalise the field in which practice guides, case studies and information leaflets aimed at supporting practitioners to develop intergenerational programmes, have also been produced. Here too the CIP - and others - have been responsible for developing a range of resources (Scottish Centre for Intergenerational Practice 2008/2009; Beth Johnson Foundation, 2006, 2004). These include the design and development of Approved Provider Standards to provide a UK benchmark that gives a realistic and credible basis for assessing core practice by organisations providing intergenerational programmes (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2008). Alongside this, guidelines have been designed to assist those who are seeking to monitor and evaluate intergenerational practice (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009, 2006; Ellis, 2004).

Set against this expansion of intergenerational practice, the development of shared sites in the UK has been limited. While IGSS programmes continue to grow in the United States (US), with over 280 documented sites in existence at the start of the 21st century (Goyer, 2001), shared sites in the UK are a relatively new

phenomenon. At the time of writing, few UK centres with explicit intergenerational focuses have been identified in the literature. It should be noted that there may be other sites in which older adults and young people share facilities, but these facilities do not offer or actively encourage 'shared' activities (Vegeris and Campbell-Barr, 2007). As a result, the centres referred to below are two examples that have been described in various reports or known to myself through word of mouth.

In London, the Bromley by Bow Centre is a long established centre that addresses the needs of the whole community by incorporating a health centre, children's centres in two separate locations, and dedicated arts spaces. An intergenerational approach has evolved as a fundamental tenet of centre philosophy, and spaces, facilities, and services are shared between different users (Froggett et al., 2005). By contrast, the Big Kidz Playzone in Lytham St Annes, England has been developed from an unused local site into an adventure play park and skate arena featuring specially designed intergenerational equipment for all age groups. This outside, shared site is intended to encourage the generations to interact, exercise, spend time and play together (Melville and Bernard, 2011).

Given their longer history in the US, it is not surprising that advice for practitioners about the establishment of IGSSs is available. For example, a number of manuals have been published that offer guidance on how to plan, design and support such sites (Steinig, 2006, 2002; Generations United, 2005b). As yet though, minimal work has been done to transfer this guidance to a UK or European context although funders such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation are actively

interested in considering how existing children's centres could become multigenerational centres (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2011). In addition, United for All Ages – a social enterprise - is another organisation interested in the potential for developing shared sites 'for all ages' in the UK (United for All Ages, 2011).

From the available (mostly North American) practice evidence, existing IGSSs vary in structure and composition, but they commonly have two main programme components: one that serves older adults and another that serves children and younger people. The majority of shared sites serve participants under the age of 12 and those over the age of 50 (Goyer, 2001). However, there are also programmes and sites that serve middle school, high school and even college-age youth and young adults. Moreover, shared sites have the potential to serve participants with all levels of physical and mental abilities including older adults with dementia, and children and adults with disabilities (Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007).

In 1998, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) released the results of their survey on shared sites, identifying the range of shared site programme possibilities and reporting on the most common varieties. Of the shared site programmes described in this study, 72 distinct models were noted (Goyer and Zuses, 1998). The most prevalent model was the nursing home/child care centre model, where child care is provided within a nursing home and where there are interactive, planned activities between the generations (Generations United, 2002). Since this survey, Generations United (2006) has provided details of an

additional 30 shared site programme models that either were not captured by the AARP survey or had developed in the following years. Other common shared site models recognised in the literature include: after school programmes for students in senior centres; shared housing for older adults and college students; community centres with programmes for all generations; workplace settings designed to support collaborative intergenerational teams; and outdoor spaces such as parks (Generations United, 2006).

The literature also suggests that IGSSs are ideal for building bridges between the generations and, according to Generations United (2006), never before has the opportunity to unite the generations under one roof been greater. Shared sites offer increased opportunities for interactions between the generations, can provide shared planning opportunities for staff, and shared space and equipment to use when engaging in intergenerational activities (Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007). It has also been suggested that the co-location of services eliminates the need for transportation services that can often limit contact between generations that are normally served at different locations (Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007). It is perhaps not surprising then that policy makers and planners have been increasingly drawn to the potential of intergenerational practice (and IGSSs as one manifestation of this) to address wider societal concerns driven by demographic ageing and what is regarded as the increasing disconnect between older and younger people (Generations United, 2006; Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Granville, 2002).

3.3 Policy Drivers and Policy Developments

Like many developed nations, the UK has an ageing population. In 2010, life expectancy in the UK reached its highest level on record for both males and females and the number of centenarians had increased fivefold since 1980 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Over the last 25 years, the percentage of the population aged 65 and over increased from 15 per cent in 1985 to 17 per cent in 2010, resulting in an increase of 1.7 million people in this age group (Office for National Statistics, 2011). Over the same period, the proportion of the population aged under 16 decreased from 21 to 19 per cent (Office for National Statistics, 2011). By 2035, 23 per cent of the UK population is projected to be aged 65 and over compared to 18 per cent aged under 16 (Office for National Statistics, 2011).

According to the European Commission (2009), this demographic evolution will be accompanied by profound social changes in terms of social protection, housing and employment. Therefore, interest in intergenerational practice and what it can achieve has grown amongst policymakers in the UK and Europe since the 1990s (Abrahams et al., 2007; Hatton-Yeo, 2006). At a public and policy level, this finds expression in what is called 'the generational equity debate' described below. This has often focused on the negative challenges of ageing, such as the need for increased expenditure on pensions, health care and social protection systems. Such systems are dependent on the concept of intergenerational solidarity, an integral part of the European economic and social system and, therefore, a crucial factor in this debate (European Commission, 2009).

According to Bengston and Putney (2006), current concerns are primarily economic – with the focus on older and younger generations sharing or competing for scarce resources. These concerns around intergenerational equity are exacerbated by on-going commentaries, especially in popular media, about the so-called breakdown of the social contract between the generations. In the UK, David Willetts' (2010) book *The Pinch* has exacerbated such concerns by blaming older generations – mainly the baby boomers - for taking jobs and welfare away from younger people. In the same year that this book was published, Howker and Malik's (2010) *Jilted Generation*, as well as others (Beckett, 2010; Hutton, 2010), suggested that older generations have failed to provide for the needs of future generations and they graphically describe the problems faced by today's young adults as they struggle to find homes, secure jobs and gain fair access to pensions and a comfortable retirement in later life.

The generational equity debate in the public media is now also evident in policy (debates) and is invoked by politicians. Labour leader Ed Miliband (2011) has warned, for example, that it is government inaction that is in danger of creating a 'jilted generation'. In response to Willetts' (2010) claim that older generations are to blame for "stealing their children's future", many others stress equally as strongly the importance of intergenerational solidarity in the context of ageing societies (AGE, 2012; Beth Johnson Foundation, 2011) and go on further to suggest that "making the intergenerational contract work to resolve these issues will be increasingly important in the years ahead" (Phillipson, 2010: 25). Yet other commentators suggest that this 'intergenerational war' must be called off (Irvin, 2010) and argue that "this generational slanging match is the wrong political

argument to be having” (Bunting, 2010). In the context of the current economic climate in many countries around the world, it seems increasingly unlikely that this debate will be resolved any time soon. However, whichever side of the debate one might favour, society will have to re-balance the needs of an ageing population while also tackling new difficulties faced by other age groups to ensure that all generations are treated fairly and equally (AGE, 2012). Attaining this balance will require that policies and practices such as urban planning, housing, employment, social care, mobility and public transport all address the issue of intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational relations (AGE, 2012).

3.4 The Development of Intergenerational Policy in the UK

Although intergenerational practice is still in the early stages of development in the UK, I demonstrate in this section that governments have become increasingly interested in its implications for social policy. I explore how dominant ideas about intergenerational practice are embedded in policies such as those governing education, health and social services, and employment. I draw attention to recent policy initiatives and announcements that recognise intergenerational practice as a catalyst for social change in improving the lives of its citizens, and I also describe how government policy has begun to support intergenerational activities as a means for developing community cohesion. Finally, the UK has a devolved government and, as a result, I explain how some countries in the UK have been more committed to furthering intergenerational policy and practice than others. The account of the development of UK policy given below was published as part of

my recent article on IGSSs (Melville and Bernard, 2011) but has been updated and revised for inclusion here.

It is also important to briefly set these UK policy developments in their European (and wider) context. Notwithstanding the recent debates noted above, intergenerational solidarity has been an important element of European agendas for some twenty years or more. Reflecting governmental concern over growing segregation between the generations, 1993 was designated as the 'European Year of Older People and Solidarity between Generations' (AGE, 2012). This was followed in 1999 by the 'International Year of Older Persons', in preparation for which the United Nations developed a conceptual framework and declaration which included, as one of its four key facets, the term 'multigenerational relationships' (Zaida, Gasior, and Sidorenko, 2010). This in turn led to the 2002 Second World Assembly on Ageing being titled, *Building a Society for all Ages*, and to the development of a guide to international policy and action on ageing for the 21st century (Walker and Sidorenko, 2004).

European policy makers subsequently began to reflect on how best to respond to the challenge of Europe's ageing society. The result was a conference held in Brdo, Slovenia and titled *Intergenerational Solidarity for Cohesive and Sustainable Societies*. Organised by the Slovene Presidency of the European Union, the conference examined ways of re-forging social bonds between the generations and initiating political changes aimed at strengthening intergenerational solidarity (AGE, 2012). It was during this conference that the Slovene Presidency of the European Union designated April 29th as the first European Day of

Intergenerational Solidarity and Cooperation (AGE, 2012). More recently still, 2012 was declared the *EU Year on Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity* (AGE, 2012). These campaigns and declarations have played an integral part in raising awareness of the need for policy change and encouraging EU policy-makers to place intergenerational solidarity high on the European agenda (Melville, 2009) although, as will be seen below, this has not necessarily been matched in all countries of the UK.

3.4.1 UK Policy Developments

The UK does not, as yet, have anything that might be termed ‘an intergenerational policy’. However, the seeds of such a policy can be discerned in a variety of initiatives which, in recent years, have addressed three key policy areas: the building of active communities; community regeneration and neighbourhood renewal; and social inclusion (Lloyd, 2008; Bernard, 2006; Pain, 2005). In addition, beliefs about the benefits of intergenerational practice can be found embedded in policies governing education, health and social services, and employment. Below, I draw attention to some of the policy documents which have helped frame initiatives affecting communities, as well as the services available for children, young people and old people. Given the rapidly changing nature of policy, this discussion concentrates pragmatically on developments over the last 10-15 years.

At a national level, UK intergenerational policy and practice can be seen to be most closely associated with the policies developed by the previous Labour government around ageing in general, and active ageing in particular. These

policies promoted access to lifelong learning and volunteering (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2006; Department for Work and Pensions, 2005), encouraged the involvement of older people in intergenerational programmes (Department of Health, 2007), and suggested the creation of 'intergenerational communities' as a means of providing a higher quality of life for all generations (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008).

By contrast, social policy around children and young people has yet to incorporate an intergenerational approach in any meaningful manner although the National Childcare Strategy Green Paper (Department for Education and Employment, 1998) gave local authorities the strategic responsibility for developing Children's Centres in partnership with local communities. In theory, these centres offer an integrated approach to service provision (Pain, 2005), but it is interesting that, a decade on, a number of these centres are only now beginning to explore the IGSS model as a way of delivering services and involving the wider community. One important barrier to the development of intergenerational activities involving children is the need to conform to the legal frameworks set out in key policies (Vegeris and Campbell-Barr, 2007).

Aside from the creation of Children's Centres, a background paper for the former Labour government suggests that both younger and older adults are central to sustainable communities and to the development of more inclusive public spaces (Pain, 2005). Other strategies have recognised the importance of building trust and capacity in communities through encouraging intergenerational volunteering (HM Treasury & Department for Children, Schools, and Families, 2007), and have

attempted to engage citizens of all ages in community renewal and sustainable development activities (Local Government Association, 2007; Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006).

The intergenerational dimensions of these various policy developments eventually found expression in the cross-departmental *Generations Together* programme: a £5.5m initiative designed to operate in England between 2009 and 2011 (HM Government, 2009). This was the former Labour government's first concerted attempt at generating wider interest in intergenerational practice. Over a two-year period, the programme aimed to showcase a range of 12 intergenerational projects across England, share best practice about breaking down barriers, and improve understanding between generations (HM Government, 2009). Alongside this, the *Inspiring Communities Initiative* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009) funded 15 neighbourhood projects, in partnership with Local Authorities and secondary schools, to improve the life chances of disadvantaged young people. In its delivery plan, the *Generations Together* programme committed to support residents from *Inspiring Communities* neighbourhoods to develop their own intergenerational volunteering opportunities. Both programmes were also the subject of externally commissioned evaluations, but these were subsequently axed: victims of the new coalition government's first round of spending cuts.

One other promising development was the creation of the 'Intergenerational Futures All Party Parliamentary Group'. With officers from both Houses of Parliament and all the major political parties, the Group's main purpose has been

to enable Parliamentarians to develop a better understanding of intergenerational policy and practice. Early in 2009, the Group launched an inquiry to explore issues concerning intergenerational fairness, employment policy and practice, as well as the immediate impact of the recession. The resulting report (IGFAPPG, 2009: 5) focussed on how to achieve a better work-life balance for people of all ages and argued that 'We all need to look more deeply at the commonality of issues across generations'.

It is evident from this brief overview that local and national government in the UK has been quite slow in waking up to the potential of intergenerational approaches in general, and shared sites in particular, to address a number of key policy concerns. Certainly this is the case in England. However, the UK has devolved government, and more promising developments have emanated from the ageing strategies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Wales, both of its ageing strategies to date (in 2003 and 2007) have set out to provide an integrated framework for all statutory bodies to plan for an ageing society and improve services, and have included a specific funded commitment to develop intergenerational work as a means of social inclusion for older adults (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007, 2003). The subsequent Welsh strategy for intergenerational practice is a direct offshoot of these policies and makes an explicit suggestion that volunteers in Children's Centres could be older people (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008). At the time of writing, consultation on Phase 3 (2013-2023) of *The Strategy for Older People in Wales* has just closed (17.01.13). However, it is anticipated that the new ten-year strategy (Welsh Assembly Government, 2012:32) will lay emphasis on improving the social and built environments in an attempt to create an age-friendly

environment 'sensitive to the needs of all people within it, regardless of their age or other factors'.

In Scotland, their ageing strategy included an action plan 'to forge better links between the generations' by establishing a Centre for Intergenerational Practice (Scottish Executive, 2007: 14). Similarly, Northern Ireland 's ageing policy makes reference to intergenerational practice as a means of improving understanding between the generations and challenging negative stereotypes among younger people (Office of the First Minister and the Deputy First Minister, 2005). Intergenerational projects are also a key element of Community Safety Partnerships (Northern Ireland Office, 2009), and a set of recommendations around implementing intergenerational approaches across the whole of Northern Ireland have also been developed (Hatton-Yeo, 2008).

At a more local level, a number of English local authorities have made significant progress in developing a strategic approach to intergenerational work. The cities of Leeds and Manchester both have published plans which identify where intergenerational approaches can help meet existing strategies and priorities and assist the city councils in developing intergenerational connections (Manchester City Council, 2007; Leeds City Council 2009). In Derbyshire, the County Council has an explicit intergenerational strategy and has produced a resource pack and guide to help teachers and members of the community to set up their own intergenerational projects (Derbyshire County Council, 2010, 2007).

In summary then, although there are now clear intergenerational strategies and policies in both Wales and Scotland, intergenerational activity in England and

Northern Ireland is only really found embedded in wider policies about children, younger and older people, and the community. England has been the slowest country to respond in both policy and practice terms and, until the announcement of the 'Generations Together' programme in 2009, only very small steps had been taken to promote intergenerational activities. Policy developments have also reflected the history of intergenerational practice in the UK, in the sense that we can discern a tangible shift from a focus on issues solely affecting older people, to one that now incorporates the needs of younger people and a concern with building sustainable communities for all generations. In many ways therefore, it appears as if intergenerational practice has paved the way for, rather than flows from, policy initiatives.

Indeed, while the practice field has shown how intergenerational activities can bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial ways, policy is only just beginning to recognise the value of this approach. Part of the problem undoubtedly reflects uncertainties over the demonstrable benefits of intergenerational practice to which I turn below. In addition, a number of barriers, not necessarily unique to the UK, have been identified in the literature to explain this gap between policy and practice – or perhaps more accurately time lag - between practice and policy. These include: the lack of an evidence base; a lack of understanding about what intergenerational practice is; a lack of joined up thinking between government departments; and the limited availability of (mainstream) funding (Melville, 2009; Kaplan and Kuehne, 2001). Although the UK government is clearly interested in intergenerational practice as a way of translating social policy goals into practical outcomes, without a strong evidence-base concerning the benefits and outcomes

of such initiatives, we should not be surprised if policymakers continue to neglect incorporating an explicit intergenerational focus into public policy. It is thus to the research and the existing evidence base that I now turn.

3.5 The Research Evidence

Whilst intergenerational programmes have developed steadily over the past 20 years, our knowledge and understanding of how these programmes work, and if they meet their aims and objectives, is still limited (Steining, 2006; Granville, 2002; Goyer, 1999; Kuehne, 1999). To date, only four overviews of intergenerational practice have been conducted in the UK (Martin et al., 2010; Springate et al., 2008; Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Granville, 2002). These reviews are limited in their scope and, for the purposes of this study do not really focus on IGSSs. However, what they do highlight is that compared to the rapidly growing quantity and variability of programmes and projects, the number of documented evaluation and research studies is not keeping pace (Jarrott, 2011; Melville, 2009; Kuehne, 2003a; Granville, 2002; Kaplan and Kuehne, 2001). It should also be noted that similar concerns have been expressed about the limited amount of research being conducted in Europe and countries other than the United States (Melville, 2009; Statham, 2009; Granville, 2002). As a result, it is important to sound a caution here that lessons learned from intergenerational practice in the US are not necessarily directly transferrable to other cultural and policy contexts, nor to countries where there may be different traditions and methods of conducting research.

That said, in her early review of intergenerational practice in the UK, Granville (2002) argued that more research was required to validate claims made by practitioners about the benefits of intergenerational practice. Pain (2005) adds to this discussion by asserting that evaluation of outcomes is a challenging task for projects; and that both 'hard' and 'soft' outcomes are difficult to quantify as they are often diffuse and long term. According to Springate et al. (2008), the evidence base remains weak, particularly in relation to outcomes. To date in the UK, there has been no large-scale, formal, systematic evaluation of intergenerational projects and the international base of reliable data on outcomes is also relatively small (Jarrott, 2011; Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007; Epstein and Boisvert, 2005). Many researchers have suggested that this is due to the fact that intergenerational practice is inherently 'unsuited' to quantitative research methodologies given the often small sample sizes, the variability of projects and schemes, confusion over what aims and objectives to measure, and difficulty in obtaining a control group (Epstein and Boisvert, 2005; Bowen et al., 2000; Brabazon and Disch, 1997).

Moreover, evaluation data often focus on outcomes without attention to the nature of the interactions between generations and have ignored more fundamental questions pertaining to whether, and how, participants interact (Jarrott et al., 2008). However, understanding the *process* of intergenerational contact is central to understanding its outcomes. According to Jarrott et al. (2008), experiences of many practitioners in the field have highlighted interaction (both formal and informal) as the central mechanism for achieving mutual benefit in intergenerational practices. Linked with this, and as we saw in Chapter 2, there are a limited number of documented research studies of intergenerational practice

drawing on established theoretical frameworks, whilst our knowledge of how effective programmes are in meeting participant needs is also inadequate (Kuehne, 2003b; Goyer, 1998). Reports that do exist are often based on anecdotal information that lacks any clear conceptual framework to begin from and only emphasises the immediate effect of a programme.

For the purposes of this study therefore, and bearing the above cautions in mind, I turn now to look at the still limited research evidence on IGSSs. Whilst a body of research does exist, it is often based on small, non-representative samples of participants and is not subject to rigorous methodology (Jarrott and Bruno, 2007; Raynes, 2004; Granville, 2002). However, it does permit us to examine some of the benefits and obstacles associated with the development of IGSSs and help us, as Jarrott (2008) argues, to ask critical questions such as at what expense are these benefits acquired; and what are their connected 'costs'? Encouragingly too, it has been suggested that many of these challenges can be avoided or overcome with some foresight, appropriate support and tools (Jarrott, 2008). Below, I consider first the benefits and then the obstacles, before concluding this review by drawing out the implications for my own study and how these have shaped my own research questions.

3.6 Intergenerational Shared Sites: Benefits

Existing studies of IGSS programmes have consistently indicated that they are mutually beneficial for all participants, and can yield positive outcomes for individuals, both younger and older, for staff, for the organisation itself, for local

communities, and for the wider society (Jarrott et al., 2011; Goyer, 2001; Goyer and Zuses, 1998). For example, one of the overviews of intergenerational practice (Springate et al., 2008) found that it has great potential for changing negative perceptions of older adults and young people and increasing the health and well-being of those involved. According to the Beth Johnson Foundation (2011), there is also clear evidence that intergenerational practices can improve service design and delivery, and improve the quality of life experienced at the local community level. IGSSs have been identified as key developments in local communities with the potential to explore solutions to conflicts over public space, contribute to regeneration projects, enhance active citizenship among generations, improve community cohesion and deliver aspects of neighbourhood renewal schemes (Pain, 2005; Granville, 2002; Kaplan, 2001). For the purposes of this review, benefits are looked at in relation to individual participants; the wider community; in terms of practical administrative and operational issues; and in terms of financial considerations.

Benefits for individual participants

According to the AARP Shared Site Survey (Goyer and Zuses, 1998), IGSS administrators and staff report that the most successful aspects of IGSSs are the positive benefits to participants and the increased frequency of positive, informal interactions among the generations. Martin et al. (2010) found that the most fundamental outcome for participants was that they enjoyed the activities. More specifically, Springate et al. (2008) identify four main outcomes for both younger and older participants: increased understanding, friendship, enjoyment, and

confidence. Benefits specific to older adults relate mainly to improved health and well-being, reduced isolation and social exclusion, and a renewed sense of worth (Springate et al., 2008; Jarrott and Bruno, 2007). Outcomes particular to young people include gaining specific skills, improved self-esteem, and greater empathy for older adults (Springate et al., 2008 Jarrott and Bruno, 2007).

Other research on 'generational attitudes' has explored whether contact was successful in fostering positive images of ageing, thereby reducing stereotypes and various forms of discrimination and suggests that young people and older adults both benefit from shared experiences and daily contact (Hayes, 2003; Salari, 2002; Chamberlain et al., 1994; Stremmel et al., 1994; Fox and Giles, 1993).

Yet other studies have examined the personal and social skills of youth and younger children taking part in IGSS programmes. Results indicate that skills development – verbal, cognitive and practical, is enhanced in comparison to their counterparts in non-IGSS programmes (Rosebrook, 2008). It has also been suggested that young people often thrive on the individual attention that older adults are able to provide in this type of setting (Jarrott, 2008). For their part, older adult volunteers obtain a sense of satisfaction from participating in such activities and have reported increased self-esteem, an enhanced sense of belonging, and increased social interaction (Jarrott, 2011; Kocarnik and Ponzetti, 1991).

Another consistent theme in the literature is the benefits that accrue to staff, such as the ability to learn about the role and importance of other populations that they

do not normally work with (Jarrott et al., 2004). Additionally, it has been suggested that the availability of, and access to, on-site child care can improve staff recruitment and retention (Chamberlain et al., 1994). The staff in most IGSS programmes also report positive feelings about their programmes; and this, and the added benefits of on-site child care in some facilities, contributes to lower staff turnover in an area that is often plagued with high staff turnover and stress (Jarrott et al., 2004).

Benefits for the wider community

Beyond the narrow focus of benefit(s) to individual participants, several beneficial outcomes for the wider community have also been identified in the IGSS literature. These include: improved community cohesion; its ability to help address other community-related social issues; to help build social capital and develop community capacity; its impact in terms of the growth in volunteering; and on the ways in which educational institutions have become more involved in their communities (Springate et al., 2008).

Practical and administrative benefits

Several research and evaluation studies have considered the administrative and practical dimensions of IGSSs as well as exploring the significance of the context and setting for programme objectives and outcomes. As Kuehne (2003b) states, institutional contexts can be important to IGSS programme outcomes but are often not apparent on the surface. Kuehne and Kaplan (2001) also warn us that the

impact of institutional variables and the nature and quality of administrative leadership in IGSS programmes should not be underestimated. For example, administrators are more likely to provide truly intergenerational activities if they hold positive attitudes toward intergenerational exchanges in general (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001).

This raises the associated issue of the quality of staff working in IGSSs and several studies have emphasised the need for adequately trained staff: staff who possess the skills and knowledge related to meeting age-appropriate developmental needs; and who are able to develop and implement IGSS programmes (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001; Stremmel et al., 1994 Kocarnik and Ponzetti, 1991). The importance of having – or developing - expertise in working with both younger and older participant groups has also been highlighted by many researchers as essential in planning and facilitating developmentally appropriate programmes (Hayes, 2003; Salari, 2002; Foster, 1997). Similarly, the research evidence shows that IGSS programmes work best when participants are involved from the beginning, with staff, in planning what they want to do (Bressler, 2005) rather than having things done to and/or for them (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001).

The 'setting' has emerged as another significant factor in the success or otherwise of IGSSs (Kaplan, 2007; Jarrott et al., 2004). This is supported by Salari's (2002) research examining age-appropriate environments in intergenerational interaction which concluded that variations in the physical environment, staff demeanour, and activity content of programming, can generate vastly different responses and outcomes. Likewise, Hayes' (2003) study and Jarrott and Bruno's (2003) work,

illustrates that time and frequent, regular, opportunities for intergenerational contact and interaction are the best combination for building positive relationships in an IGSS community.

Financial benefits

Research shows too that IGSSs are potentially cost-effective, and cost containment has been one of the main benefits identified in the literature (Jarrott et al., 2008; Butts, 2005; Chamberlain et al., 1994). According to Peterson and Butts (2001), IGSSs have the unique ability to 'expand funding options' by attracting new grants drawing from traditional children, young people and older adults' services and/or sources. Similarly, Hayden's (2003) financial analysis of an IGSS programme generated a list of 'cost-effective' benefits including shared services such as child and nursing care and volunteering. Perhaps the most comprehensive and noteworthy study in this area is Generations United's (Jarrott et al., 2008) comparative analysis of the operational costs of IGSSs. The findings show that the use of shared sites can result in a decrease in total expenditures, and a lessening of programme costs when older adult and young people's services share expenses. Furthermore, programmes with high levels of intergenerational contact cost only as much, or less, to operate than programmes without high intergenerational contact.

3.7 Intergenerational Shared Sites: Obstacles and Challenges

Much of the literature has emphasised the diverse obstacles and challenges associated with implementing IGSS programmes (Martin et al., 2010; Springate et al., 2008; Jarrott and Bruno, 2007; Granville, 2002; Peterson and Butts, 2001). I focus here on four main areas within the research literature: information and support; funding and sustainability; staffing; and issues around regulations, liability and risk management.

Information and support

According to Peterson and Butts (2001), one of the most significant challenges to the further development of IGSSs is people's lack of understanding about the model and knowledge of its benefits. Steining (2002) argues that intergenerational approaches are not seen as a priority by many organisations who work solely with older adults or with young people and children. As noted earlier, detailed literature reviews of the intergenerational practice field in general and IGSSs in particular, are limited, and even the information that does exist often fails to reach the appropriate audiences (Jarrott and Bruno, 2007).

In the UK, a further obstacle is the lack of agreed national principles or priorities around intergenerational practice and IGSS programmes (Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Granville, 2002), coupled with continuing confusion over terminology, meaning and purpose. This is exacerbated by: the difficulties of networking with other IGSS programmes; locating appropriate and culturally-relevant resource materials for IGSS programmes; collaborating with newer and non-traditional agencies; and

lack of support from key stakeholders (Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Jarrott et al., 2006; Goyer, 1998/99).

Funding and sustainability

Whilst it has been suggested that the potential for funding IGSS programmes has never been greater (Generations United, 2006), the mainly US literature notes various challenges in accessing it. Many intergenerational programmes are developed by professionals in the field who have identified a need in their community and matched it with an available community resource. According to Goyer (2001), many IGSS programmes are begun with minimal financial resources and are sustained on in-kind donations, making the idea of securing long-term monetary support, or support for research and evaluation seem unrealistic and/or impossible. As a result, short-term funding continues to restrict the development of continuous programmes over extended periods of time and impacts negatively on the potential for associated research and evaluation (Hatton-Yeo, 2002).

Peterson and Butts (2001: 38) also observe that, “funding streams follow awareness”. However, in the US and UK (and in many European states), there is no central source of funding information about IGSSs as well as a lack of ‘explicit language’ and understanding of the model and of practice in funding proposals and guidelines. This limits grant seekers who may not be familiar with intergenerational approaches but who are looking to develop them (Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Jarrott, 2006; Steining, 2006; Butts, 2005). Key stakeholders tend to have

separate funding streams earmarked for the age groups they serve (Henkin and Butts, 2002), and will allocate to organisations for specific activities and target populations (Willem van Vliet, 2011). Moreover, multiple requirements, coupled with conflicting standards, often impede IGSS funding success (Peterson and Butts, 2001), while private funders usually have a restricted domain of funding priorities and concentrate resources on specific age groups such as children, or on topics such as health (Butts, 2005).

Staff and training

The literature identifies various staffing barriers in the implementation and sustainability of IGSS programmes (Jarrott, 2008; Rosebrook and Bruno, 2005). These relate mainly to staff training and adequate staffing levels. Professionals in the field have highlighted the tendency for IGSS programming to 'belong' to one or two dedicated staff members and the sustainability of these programmes is contingent on their continued dedication (Rosebrook and Bruno, 2005). When such staff members leave a programme, it habitually ceases to exist (Rosebrook and Bruno, 2005). A more specific obstacle concerns the need for staff working with various generations to have specific knowledge about these different age groups (Jarrott, 2008). The research evidence highlights the fact that very few staff have received specialised training in how to design IGSS activities that have value and meaning for all participants (Hatton-Yeo and Melville, 2011; Jarrott, 2008). This means that staff are often unsure whether IGSS activities are suitable for, and will benefit, both generations involved (Salari, 2002).

Regulations, liability and risk management

A final set of obstacles consistently highlighted in the literature pertains to the running of IGSS programmes with two contrasting age groups. Foremost amongst these are concerns over both child and older adult protection issues in these settings (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2008). In the US, Peterson and Butts (2001) also identify a range of barriers such as: a lack of collaboration and communication between regulating and licensing agencies and organisations; a variety of zoning and regulatory requirements among different localities; conflicting liability concerns within the various age groups; and opposing risk factors when working with different age groups. In addition, the cost of liability insurance is related to age-specific risk determinants and means that IGSS programmes are often subject to high costs (Steining, 2006). Finally, practical issues such as infection control and transportation barriers have all been identified in the literature as potential obstacles to, and challenges for the establishment of IGSSs, along with the lack of leadership in the field which has prevented the establishment of accreditation standards (Stremmel et al., 1994).

3.8 Conclusion: Framing my own study

This chapter has reviewed the research evidence and the evolution of intergenerational policy and practice in general and, of IGSSs in particular. Increasing numbers of intergenerational activities and projects are being established throughout the UK and there is growing interest in the development of shared sites. This is despite the fact that the UK still does not have anything resembling an 'intergenerational policy', although a number of the devolved

nations do have intergenerational strategies. It is evident that intergenerational practice in the UK has paved the way for, rather than originating directly from, policy initiatives (Melville and Bernard, 2011). Alongside this, the research evidence – especially on the development and impacts of IGSSs - is patchy and underdeveloped, tends to employ largely qualitative designs and methods collected through direct report, and is lacking reliable quantitative data on key outcomes (Jarrott, 2011; Jarrott and Weintraub, 2007; Epstein and Boisvert, 2005). Kuehne and Collins (1997) further contend that little concrete evidence exists regarding the capacity of IGSS programmes to meet identified goals, as many publications or reports have not provided a theoretical context, results or recommendations that are amenable to evaluation, critique or replication. Reports that do exist are often based on anecdotal information that lacks any clear conceptual framework to begin from and only emphasises the immediate effects of a project or programme. Therefore, key unanswered questions for IGSSs still remain, such as – how long do benefits last; can the activities and programmes be copied and reproduced in various settings; and how do IGSSs compare to other types of schemes and programmes?

That said, from the evidence which does exist, it is possible to draw out a number of common factors that seem to be essential to good intergenerational work and which are also important for the development of IGSSs (Martin et al., 2010; Springate et al., 2008; Epstein and Boisvert, 2006; Hatton-Yeo, 2006). These include:

- *Preparation and partnerships* (e.g. working with partners beforehand and developing good relationships with them; having people who champion intergenerational developments; etc.);
- *Funding and sustainability* (e.g. making sure appropriate funding is available; being realistic about what can be achieved with the funding and resources available; using a long-term approach; considering monitoring and evaluation needs; etc.);
- *Recruitment and selection of participants* (e.g. understanding the needs of participants; looking at the balance of young to old; etc.);
- *Activities* (e.g. involving participants in the planning and design; tailoring activities to the needs and abilities of the participants; having activities that engage everyone and are interactive; etc.);
- *Organisation and logistics* (e.g. ensuring the venue is familiar and welcoming; optimal length and duration of sessions; on-going and regular contact between staff and participants; etc.);
- *Delivery and staffing* (e.g. ratios of staff to participants; having committed and enthusiastic staff; having skilled and appropriately trained staff; etc.).

It is also pertinent to note that, in an effort to professionalise the intergenerational practice field, researchers and practitioners have devised practice standards and a wide variety of resources and ‘how-to’ guides (Melville, 2009). These user-friendly manuals are designed to help support individuals and organisations that are either involved, or plan to be involved in, the development of IGSSs (see for example, 4Children, 2011; Generations United, 2007, 2005, 2002; Larkin & Rosebrook, 2002).

This review of the research, policy and practice about IGSSs and intergenerational practice has implications for the design of my own study and, in particular, for the research questions it seeks to answer. With reference to the original aims and objectives for the study as set out in the opening chapter, and drawing on the material reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, Table 3.1 articulates the questions which have guided my empirical work as I sought to research and evaluate the first purpose-built intergenerational centre in the UK.

Original aims and objectives	My research questions
1. To tell the story of this unique development.	1. How has this unique purpose-built Centre been developed?
2. To consolidate what is currently a body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the benefits of intergenerational practice into a more systematic and critical review of the research literature.	2a. What does the research evidence from the past 20 years tell us about the impacts and benefits of IGSSs? 2b. To what extent has this research evidence been taken into account by the developers and designers of the Centre?
3. To build on the findings of research already undertaken on the impacts and	3a. How has the design of the Centre - both the social and built environments -

benefits of shared-site intergenerational centres around the world to assist the developers of the London centre to establish baseline measures and appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools which can be used to assess progress and change over time.	<p>promoted or inhibited interaction between the generations?</p> <p>3b. How has the provision of services and activities in the Centre met the needs of users?</p>
4. To employ a mix of both conventional and more innovative qualitative, visual and observation research methods to explore what involvement in the intergenerational centre means to key players, and what working intergenerationally actually entails.	<p>4a. In what ways has the Centre sought to involve and engage older adults and young people of varying ages and needs?</p> <p>4b. How have the processes involved in the development of the Centre influenced how it is used (and by whom)?</p>
	5. What lessons can be learnt to assist both the Centre itself and others who might be interested in developing similar initiatives?

Table 3.1: Aims, objectives and research questions

Having set out my research questions I turn, in the next two chapters, to an account of the methodology and methods which were used in the study. Here, I explain the rationale for my chosen research design and provide an account of how the research design was put into action.

Chapter 4

Designing the Research

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I reflect back on the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 in order to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in existing research designs and provide a basis for the approach and methods I chose. I discuss how using a qualitative research strategy resonates with the aims of my study which seeks to ‘tell the story’ of the development of the Centre and the ways in which it has sought to involve and engage older and younger adults in the area it serves. I then go on to explain my choice of a qualitative approach that combines a case study method with ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews. I explore the limitations of my study and the ethical issues which have underpinned the entire research process. Finally, I introduce the thematic framework used for my analysis.

4.2 Existing Research

My review of the literature has highlighted several methodological challenges in intergenerational programme research and evaluation which need to be addressed before embarking on further research. These challenges relate to: the mono-generational focus of much existing research; a lack of understanding of the processes taking place; an overriding emphasis on activities; and limited

understanding of the contexts against which intergenerational programmes in general, and intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs) in particular are set.

Despite the fact that IGSSs are meant to serve all generations, most research conducted in the field assesses the experiences of *one generation*, neglecting the experiences of the other (Jarrott et al., 2008). It is also limited by the single model typically considered in documented studies, namely 'daycare' for children based within an older adults' long term care facility (Kuehne and Kaplan, 2001).

Kuehne (2003: 89) suggests too that the field needs a focus on intergenerational programme activities as serving a purpose greater than the activities themselves, and a measurement of outcomes related to those purposes. Moreover, Jarrott et al. (2008: 435) state that a critical limitation of intergenerational research is that it conceals the process of bringing the generations together, neglecting what actually transpired during intergenerational encounters. Without information about the level and nature of interaction among participants, it is difficult to determine the reasons why intergenerational contact has considerable or no effects (Jarrott, 2010). Therefore, understanding the processes involved in interaction between the generations is central to understanding its outcomes. What is more, further research is needed at the level of informal and spontaneous intergenerational interactions in varied settings (Kaplan et al, 2007).

A further limitation is that IGSS programmes often focus mainly on activities, with minimal consideration of the intended outcomes or evaluation of the programme's effectiveness (Jarrott et al., 2004). Kuehne (2003a) and Thang (2001) also

highlight the fact that programmes take place in many different contexts and it is important to take account of context because it has relevance for the outcomes. Likewise, Kuehne (2003a: 83) suggests that “institutional contexts can be important to intergenerational programme outcomes, often in ways that are not discernible on the surface”. In addition, given the differing societal values, beliefs and practices underlying intergenerational programme initiatives, we must be careful that, in our research and evaluation of such programmes, we consider cultural issues and assumptions both underlying and affecting them (Kuehne, 2003b). As noted in Chapter 2, we should also not assume that intergenerational contact will necessarily lead to positive outcomes or positive changes in attitudes (Fox and Giles, 1993).

Taking into consideration the limitations of current research in the field – and noting the aims, objectives and research questions which frame my study – it was evident that a holistic approach was needed to begin to describe and illuminate the social culture of the Centre as well as the dynamics of intergenerational engagement between Centre users. As a result, a broadly qualitative approach was chosen which would allow me to explore these dynamics and set them in the context of stakeholders’ understandings of the concept of an IGSS model and programmes. An emphasis on context in qualitative approaches fits well with my study’s aims to examine both the environment within which the Centre was developed, and the activities and decision-making processes that led to its establishment. More specifically, I did not want to collect data that focussed simply on an outcome without exploring the nature and type of interactions occurring within the Centre. More systematic measures of the process and outcomes,

including the project's contribution to the development of intergenerational relationships through the provision of spaces and activities to encourage interaction, was critical to this study. As a result, the overall aim of my study has been to: identify factors that contributed to the successful or unsuccessful delivery of the Centre's services and/or interventions; explore a range of organisational aspects surrounding the design and delivery of the Centre; and explore the contexts in which interventions were delivered and their impact on effectiveness (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 29).

4.3 A Qualitative Research Approach

There have been numerous attempts at defining qualitative research, often by illustrating how it differs from quantitative research. Yet, Mason (2002:1) suggests that the lack of a clear definition is a great strength of qualitative research in that it cannot be "neatly pigeon-holed and reduced to a simple and prescriptive" set of principles. That said, I have used Denzin and Lincoln's (2000: 3) working definition of qualitative research as:

"... a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible ... qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them."

A major feature of qualitative research is its ability to describe and display phenomena as experienced by the study population, in great detail and in the study participant's own terms (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003: 27). As a result, one key feature of generated qualitative data is that it focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in a natural setting (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10). This is not to say that qualitative research is not concerned with explanation, but there is often an emphasis on providing a detailed account of what goes on in the setting being studied – emphasising the importance of the contextual understanding of social behaviour (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This suggests that we cannot understand the behaviour of people other than in terms of the specific environment in which they operate. Moreover, qualitative research focuses on the unfolding of events over time and on the interconnections between the actions of participants of social settings (Bryman, 2008).

Accordingly, choices about research design and research methods are crucial and are now discussed in more detail. For the purposes of my study, I have chosen to use a case study method, combining qualitative interviews with observation and documentary analysis methods.

4.3.1 Qualitative Case Study

The aim of a qualitative case study is the precise description or reconstruction of a case; primarily used when the researcher wants to “understand a real-life phenomenon in depth” (Yin, 2009: 18). While there may be a variety of specific purposes and research questions, the general objective is to develop as full an

understanding of that case as possible. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 52), case studies are used where no single perspective can provide a full account or explanation of the research issue and the primary defining feature of a case study is a “multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context”.

My study aims to capture the experiences of all participant groups simultaneously by observing the level of interaction between the generations within an intergenerational setting. More specifically, the focus of the study is on *the setting* within which services and activities were developed and are provided, rather than the services/activities themselves. The study asks not just ‘what activities are going on within the Centre’, but ‘does the Centre and its design promote communication and foster interaction between the generations?’

Using a case study design, allows for a detailed and intensive analysis of the Centre and the organisations/individuals responsible for its inception and development. I have also chosen a case study because the development of the Centre needs to be traced over time, rather than behaviours and activities occurring within it studied as mere frequencies or incidences (Yin, 2009). My research covers two very distinct phases: the planning and development of the Centre, and the implementation and delivery the Centre’s activities and services. Moreover, my study aims to establish the ‘goodness of fit’ between what the intergenerational participants’ needs are, the objectives set for the Centre, and what the Centre – as designed - has actually provided. Therefore, I have utilised a single case study design to address my research questions primarily because the Centre is unique and represents a rare opportunity to study the first building of its

kind in the UK, developed with an intergenerational approach in mind from the beginning.

One of the standard criticisms of the case study is that its findings cannot be generalised (Yin, 2009). In response, Bryman (2008) argues that the simple answer is that the purpose of the case study is not to generalise to other cases beyond this one, but to generate an intensive examination of a single case, which can then be used to engage in theory development. A key tactic is to use multiple sources of evidence as triangulation of various methods of data collection can reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation in qualitative case studies (Stake, 1994: 241) and case studies may be combined with any number of other methods of collecting data. I have chosen to use multiple qualitative methods, combining observation and semi-structured qualitative interviews with documentary analysis. It is to these other methods that I now turn.

4.3.2 Ethnography

The definition of ethnography has been subject to controversy for many years (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) and Mason (2002: 55) suggests that “ethnographic approaches encompass such a range of perspectives and activities that the idea of adhering to an ethnographic position, as though there were only one, is faintly ridiculous.” For the purposes of my study, I have subscribed to Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1995: 1) definition of ethnography, referring primarily to a particular method or set of methods that:

“... involves ethnographic participating ... in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.”

This approach was used because of its ‘fit’ with my research approach and the research questions my study addresses. Using an ethnographic approach permits me to trace the origins, and document the planning and operation of an intergenerational initiative, by illuminating the processes and decision-making behind its establishment. Moreover, such an approach helps provide an in-depth, holistic understanding of the Centre’s culture or ethos through observations of the natural environment. This is confirmed by Salari’s (2002: 323) assertion that studies involving observation can describe in rich detail those shared systems of knowledge and cultural rules that guide behaviours in intergenerational settings.

It has also been argued that observation allows the researcher to find out how something actually works or happens, offering the unique opportunity to record and analyse behaviour and interactions as they occur (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This method can be a particularly useful approach when a study is concerned with investigating a ‘process’ involving several ‘players’, and where an understanding of non-verbal communications are likely to be important (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003:35). Given that one key aim of my study was to explore the impact that the physical and social environment of the Centre had on participants’ interactions and engagement with one another, observation seemed a logical method to adopt as part of my overall design.

Moreover, the setting itself - including its physical, spatial, temporal, as well as social organisation - was central to my study because, as Denzin and Lincoln (2001) suggest, not all knowledge is articulable, recountable or constructable in an interview. Rather than relying on people's retrospective accounts and on their ability to verbalize and reconstruct a version of interactions or settings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), observation was chosen as one method of data collection not only to 'count' the types of interaction, but to consider how people use the space and interact with one another, as well as attending to who was not present or engaged in this setting. Ward (1999), for example, points to the importance of examining intergenerational contacts by means of an ethnographic approach as the locations for such contacts often include naturalistic settings and where the focus is on the insider's perspective and the researcher is personally involved in the study.

That said, it is also important to note that there are potential problems with observation which include defining the role that the observer can take and allowing them to stay in the field while observing it at the same time (Flick, 2009: 224). Another limitation in the field is the desire to observe events as they naturally occur. How much this can be achieved is uncertain because the act of observation influences the observed in most cases (Flick, 2009). As will be seen in my detailed account of the fieldwork in Chapter 5, the distinction between participant and non-participant observer is not sufficient as a description of the role that I played, or for my interactions with the people I observed. Instead, I have used Gold's (1958) description which offers a typology of participant roles and observer roles which are often organised on a continuum of degrees of involvement with, and detachment from, members of the social setting. Accordingly, my ethnographic

approach to observation sits somewhere between *observer-as-participant* and *complete observer* (Gold, 1958). In this, I acknowledge that although I could not actively participate in what I was studying, I recognise that I could also have had a direct influence on those that I intended to observe. In my role as observer, two main types of data were collected: naturally occurring conversations during stakeholder meetings, and interactions between people in the Centre.

4.3.3 Documents as Sources of Data

The analysis of documentary sources is another major method in social research, one which many qualitative researchers see as meaningful and appropriate in the context of their overall research strategy (Mason, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2000) suggest that analysing documents is one way of using unobtrusive methods and data produced for practical purposes in the field under study, providing a new and unfiltered perspective on the field and its processes. Documentary sources are particularly useful where the history of events or experiences has relevance (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003:35) and in studies where situations or events cannot be investigated by direct observation or questioning (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

As a stand-alone method, Flick (2009) warns that analysing documents gives you a very specific and sometimes limited approach to experiences and processes. Nevertheless, documents can be a very instructive addition to interviews or observations as a means to constructing a specific version of an event or process (Flick, 2009: 261). With this in mind, I have chosen to use documentary analysis

as a way of contextualising information gathered during observation and interviews, and as a means for communication by considering who has produced these documents, for what purpose, and for whom. For the purposes of my study, official documents - mainly documents generated by the London Borough of Merton and the London Development Agency - have been the primary focus. Other unsolicited documents, some in printed form as well as some non-text-based documents such as photographs and posters/leaflets were incorporated into the study. Examples of such documents include: minutes of stakeholder meetings, strategy documents, architects' drawings, text posted on the Centre's website, as well as leaflets and signs posted within the Centre. These documents were collected and analysed to provide information about how intergenerational practice was described and discussed in various forums, and by stakeholders responsible for activity planning and decision-making.

4.3.4 Qualitative Interviews

Alongside observation and documentary analysis, one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview (Yin, 2009). Qualitative interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located, and detailed subject coverage (Bryman, 2008). In my study, I have used the term qualitative interview to mean an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which "the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a rigid set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 362).

The aim of using qualitative interviews has been to explore primarily what involvement in the development of the Centre means to key stakeholders. Jarrott (2010) suggests that the perspectives of these stakeholders should be tapped as they can influence the presence, frequency, nature and sustainability of intergenerational programming and shared sites. This was crucial to my study as other stakeholders, besides the individuals it was intended would use the Centre, were involved in the potential success and sustainability of the initiative. What is more, before considering whether/how the Centre met the needs of its users, it was critical to produce a detailed account of stakeholders' vision for, and involvement in, the development of the Centre and how they believed it might foster intergenerational engagement. .

Another feature of qualitative interviewing that was integral to my study was its thematic, topic-centred approach where the researcher only has a number of general topics, themes or issues which they want to cover (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). In order to explore the impact of decisions made by stakeholders on the success of the Centre, it was crucial to conduct interviews that were not a complete and sequenced script of questions but designed to be flexible – allowing myself and the interviewee to develop unexpected themes. More pragmatically, qualitative interviews were chosen as one method of data collection because the data I wanted was not available in any other form: talking and listening to stakeholders was the only way to generate an understanding of the processes involved in designing and implementing such a Centre.

Qualitative interviews, like all research methods, have their strengths and weaknesses. The argument among many quantitative researchers is that qualitative findings rely too heavily on the “researcher’s often unsystematic views about what is significant and important” (Bryman, 2008: 366). A further criticism, as with observation, is that it is often difficult to conduct a true replication where there are no standard procedures to follow and that findings cannot be generalised to other settings (Bryman, 2008). What is more, it has been suggested that it is difficult to establish from qualitative research what the researcher actually did and how he/she arrived at the study’s conclusion. I have attempted to address these issues by detailing and documenting the whole research process from conception through to execution (Flick, 2009) in both this, and the next, chapter.

Having presented the various components of my research design, I turn now to other important considerations – notably the ethical issues attendant on a study of this nature – before concluding this chapter with a brief look at how I intended to approach the analysis of my data.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues arise at a variety of stages in social research and cannot be ignored as they relate to the integrity of a piece of research and of the disciplines involved (Mason, 2002). Bryman (2008) contends that discussion about the ethics of social research brings us into a realm in which the role of values in the research process becomes a topic of concern. Therefore, in this section, I briefly discuss the ethical considerations pertinent to my research, namely - informed consent, deception,

harm and invasion of privacy and provide a brief explanation of how these considerations were addressed.

Bryman (2008) asserts that the issue of informed consent is the most debated area within social research, with most discussions on the topic focusing on disguised or covert observation in which the researcher's true identity is unknown. Whilst many argue that this type of research is never justified, others "emphasise the extent to which we all restrict the disclosure of information about ourselves and our concerns in everyday life" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 264). In the context of ethnographic research, Punch (2001: 90) warns that gaining consent is often inappropriate because "activity is taking place that cannot be interrupted". Moreover, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 265) admit that even when operating in an overt manner, ethnographers rarely tell all people they are studying *everything* about the research and offer two reasons for this decision that are applicable to my study: an insistence on providing information to uninterested people being studied can be intrusive; and divulging too much information may affect people's behaviour in ways that invalidate the research. With this in mind, a 'position paper' outlining my roles and responsibilities as the researcher was made available to all stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre. Research participants were also made aware of what my study was about, which included providing information highlighting the possible ways in which the data may be used, and consent forms were provided to, and signed by, all potential interviewees.

It has also been suggested that deception in various degrees is common in much research because researchers often want to limit participants' understanding of what the research is about so that they respond more naturally (Bryman, 2008). Unfortunately, it is rarely feasible or desirable to provide participants with a complete account of what one's research is about (Bryman, 2008). Therefore, some have argued that it is legitimate to expose research participants to some element of deception; and that some measure of deception is acceptable in some areas where the benefits of knowledge outweigh the harms that have been minimised by following convention on confidentiality and identity (Punch, 2001).

That said, research that is likely to harm participants is regarded by most researchers as unacceptable (Bryman, 2008). While ethnographic research rarely involves the sorts of damaging consequences that may be involved in some situations, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 268) suggest "it can have significant consequences for the people being studied". Likewise, the research process may also have wider ramifications beyond immediate effects on the people being studied, or for one or more social institutions involved (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Conventional practice and ethical codes espouse the view that various safeguards should protect the privacy and identity of research participants (Punch, 2001). The key safeguard to place against the invasion of privacy is the assurance of anonymity. However, Punch (2001:92) warns that the "the cloak of anonymity for characters may not work with insiders who can easily locate the individuals concerned". Many institutions and public figures are almost impossible to disguise

so, if they choose to take part, they need to accept a certain level of exposure. This makes it precarious to assert that no harm or embarrassment will come to the individuals being researched. Nevertheless, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 267) propose that the invasion of privacy by researchers can be justified “on the grounds that since the account will be published for a specialised audience neither the people studied nor anyone else who knows them is likely to read it”.

While my study did involve observing participants who may have been unaware that they were being observed, efforts were made to respect participants’ privacy and overall well-being. In cooperation with Merton Council, staff at the Centre were notified of all times when I was present in the Centre. Despite the fact that no absolute guarantees of confidentiality could be given, every effort was made to disguise the identity of individuals. For example, nothing was recorded – either digitally or by video – only field notes were taken. Moreover, this process also included avoiding any attribution of comments, in my thesis, other reports or presentations, to identified or observed participants. How my study specifically addresses the aforementioned ethical considerations will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter when I describe the fieldwork component of my study.

4.5 Data Analysis

Having discussed my approach to designing the research and highlighted a number of the ethical dilemmas I needed to consider, I conclude this chapter by

providing a brief rationale for using thematic analysis to handle the wealth of data my study would generate.

Mason (2002) argues that the type of analysis used depends on the nature of the research questions and the purpose of the study. Unlike quantitative analysis, Ritchie and Lewis (2003) warn that there are no clearly agreed rules or procedures for analysing qualitative data. As a result, several writers have distinguished between analytical approaches according to their primary aims and focus. Certain approaches such as conversation analysis or symbolic interactionism focus primarily on the use of language and the construction or structure of talk, while other approaches adopt a more descriptive or interpretive approach with the intention of understanding and reporting the views and culture of those being studied (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Given the volume of data I expected to collect, and the nature of my research questions, I decided to adopt a thematic approach to analysis which would be able to run across the data sets I would generate. Yin (2009) suggests that, unlike grounded theory, a deepening analysis of the single case is done to develop a system of categories. In this situation, selective coding is aimed less at developing a grounded *core category* (as in grounded theory) across all cases, than at generating thematic *domains and categories* for the single case first. This is corroborated by Flick (2009) who states that a thematic structure results from this cross-check, which underlines the analysis of further cases in order to increase their comparability.

As I will show in the next chapter, this was initially accomplished by adopting a descriptive approach to my data as my aim was to understand and capture the opinions of those being studied, as well as the effects of the processes involved in managing and delivering the Centre. Subsequently, I tried to find patterns of association within the data and attempted to account for why those patterns occurred. To aid this process of analysis, I used Ritchie and Lewis's (2003: 212) concept of an analytic hierarchy which includes the following stages:

- Identifying initial themes or concepts
- Labelling or tagging data by concept or theme
- Sorting data by theme or concept (in cross sectional analysis)
- Identifying elements and dimensions, refining categories, classifying data
- Summarising or synthesising data
- Establishing typologies
- Detecting patterns
- Developing explanations
- Seeking applications to wider theory/policy strategies

A thorough description of the activities involved in carrying out my qualitative analysis will be given in the next chapter where I describe the actual stages and processes involved in using Ritchie and Lewis's (2003) analytic framework.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reflected on previous research in the field of intergenerational practice which has influenced my study and research design. I have offered a rationale for using a qualitative approach in my research by highlighting the importance of understanding social phenomena and their contexts while also acknowledging the limitations of this methodology. Furthermore, I have provided an explanation for using the case study as my primary research method and adopting an ethnographic approach to 'telling the story' of the development of this unique purpose-built intergenerational centre. Within the framework of a case study approach, I have also noted the importance of using a combination of data collection methods: qualitative interviews, observation and documentary analysis, and have drawn attention to the importance of detailing and documenting all stages in the research process in order to improve the reliability and replicability of the entire process. I have also highlighted certain ethical considerations pertaining to my study. In the following chapter, I turn to focus on the fieldwork element of my study, describing in detail the tools and instruments I used and how the data was collected and analysed. I also reflect on a number of issues that arose during this process.

Chapter 5

Undertaking the Research

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I both describe and critically evaluate the fieldwork component of my study. I explain how I set about gathering the data in order to answer my research questions, including a description of work done prior to conducting my main fieldwork. I go on to describe my pilot work, as well as how access to gatekeepers was negotiated throughout the study. As part of the main fieldwork component of my study, I outline the procedures for collecting a range of pertinent documents during the planning phase of the Centre; how I undertook unstructured observations of important stakeholder meetings; and how I conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. I also detail the process of creating and implementing an observation schedule for structured observations in the Centre, and include a discussion of other observational tools that were considered. I highlight the various ethical considerations that arose during this phase of my fieldwork and reflect on my own role in the research process. Finally I describe, in detail, how I transcribed, coded and analysed the data collected.

In order to set the context for this description of the fieldwork, it is pertinent to reiterate briefly the timeline of this study (see Appendix 1). The study was intended to examine both the process(es) and outcomes of the development of the UK's

first purpose-built intergenerational centre over a three-year period from late 2008 to 2011. The first six months of my doctoral work was spent as an induction to the intergenerational field and in preparatory gathering of documentary information about the initial ideas for, and planning of, the Centre. At the same time, work had already begun to clear the site on which the Centre would be erected. Completion of the Centre was set for October/November 2009 but valuable data on the processes leading up to the opening of the building, particularly partnership building and involvement of potential participants in the planning phase of the Centre, had been on-going from late 2008. Delays to the construction and opening of the Centre resulted in my taking a six month leave of absence in order to be able to include, in my fieldwork, observations of some of the early months of the Centre's operation. This meant that instead of my main fieldwork being conducted in the middle year of the three years, it was undertaken over a longer period of 18 months.

5.2 Before Entering the Field

Both my Masters degree on the topic of intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs) (Melville, 2009) and my participation in various workshops related to intergenerational practice were important preparation for my fieldwork. As part of my induction, I made several visits to intergenerational shared sites in the UK, the US and Slovenia. My induction also included an introduction to, and time spent with, key stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre. This was important for fostering good relationships with gatekeepers and to help with future access to participants.

During my first year, I was also fortunate to be able to attend a number of national intergenerational networking events throughout the UK which provided me with the opportunity to meet with various practitioners interested in and/or participating in, developing the concept and model of IGSSs. During this time, I also received training in the use of the Intergenerational Observation Scale (IOS) developed by Dr Shannon Jarrott (2008). This training consisted of an introduction to the scale, viewing a number of practice videos and reading the manual guides before practicing coding with the scale. Having successfully completed the tasks associated with the practice videos – including my ability to demonstrate inter-rater reliability – I was granted permission to use the scale for my study should I wish. In meetings with its developer, I was also able to discuss the practicalities and relevance of the scale to my study.

5.3 Access to the Field

Gaining official access to undertake social research, to specific research sites and to participants, is unique to each study and continues to challenge researchers. Moreover, project approval by official gatekeepers does not guarantee cooperation from informal gatekeepers and participants (Burgess, 1991). Negotiating access is often based on building relationships with gatekeepers which, Burgess (1991) warns, is an ill-defined, unpredictable, uncontrollable process that researchers must learn. Additionally, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) make a distinction between access to 'public' settings as opposed to ones that are not public. Throughout the duration of my study, I was granted official access to both an open

public setting - the Centre - and to a closed, non-public one – the stakeholder meetings held at Merton's Civic Centre during the planning phase.

The setting (the Centre) for my study was predetermined and, in many ways, access had already been secured through the award of my studentship and pre-existing links with key stakeholders already involved with the project. What was not certain from the outset was continued access. For my study, I was able to gain access through a number of key individuals who acted as both sponsors and/or gatekeepers throughout the project. For example, an associate member of my supervisory team with strong links to the intergenerational field assisted me in facilitating access to relevant data sources, as well as acting as a gateway to other relevant policy-makers and key individuals involved. Additionally, an evaluation of the Centre had been written in to the contract between the funders of the project – the London Development Agency (LDA), and the successful applicant – Merton Council. This formal agreement provided me with a legitimate purpose for being present at various meetings, and in the Centre, and all stakeholders were aware not only of my presence, but understood why I was there. Moreover, two key individuals - the Centre's Programme and Project leads at Merton Council - proved invaluable during the development of the Centre as they assisted me in: collecting relevant documents produced about the Centre; allowed me to attend stakeholder meetings: and assisted me in organising stakeholder interviews. When the Centre was finally open, staff members responsible for the daily running of the Centre provided me with ongoing access while I was completing my observations.

5.4 Documenting the Centre

As noted above, and in Chapter 4, it was necessary to collect and analyse a range of documents in order to trace the origins and development of the Centre and highlight the processes and decision-making behind its establishment. During the planning phase of the Centre, I collected a range of documents produced by, for example, the Centre for Intergenerational Practice (CIP), the LDA and the Greater London Authority (GLA), and Merton Council. In total, approximately 30 documents were collected that, between them, outlined various stages of this planning phase. These included:

- Merton Council's Project and Programme Board meeting minutes detailing planning and strategy discussions and decisions about the development of the Centre since the award of the bid;
- Various permutations of architectural plans for the design of the building;
- The official contract, grant agreement and project specification between the GLA/LDA and Merton Council;
- Merton Council's internal strategy, vision and governance structure for the Centre;
- Press releases and other publicity events relating to the Centre;

- The Centre's internal publicity of scheduled activities and services (i.e. monthly schedule of events).

Throughout the duration of my study, I also compiled a visual history of the Centre detailing its development and design (these pictures will be exhibited throughout my findings chapters). I visited the site on several occasions over a three year period in order to capture modifications in the landscape and the building itself and 'map out' the surrounding area(s).

5.5 Interviews

The initial aim of my study was to conduct 20 in-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews with individuals who had contributed to the building and facility design of the Centre. These interviews would explore stakeholders' expectations and their proposed strategies for how the Centre would foster intergenerational interaction. Despite access having been secured, a number of intermediary steps needed to be completed before stakeholder interviews could be conducted. For example, approximately six months after my studentship started, I made a presentation to Merton Council during a project board meeting to explain to potential interviewees what my study was about and the nature of the data I was hoping to collect. Subsequently, confirmation from Merton Council that access to conduct the interviews with Merton Council staff was agreed.

Following this, a topic guide, information sheet and consent form were drafted (see Appendix 2, 3 and 4). The interview topic guide was created based on information

collected during observation of stakeholder meetings, learning derived from my initial review of the literature, and designed using Ritchie and Lewis's description of content mining questions (2003; 150). As such, the questions in the topic guide were designed to explore stakeholders' perceptions and understanding of intergenerational practice, as well as their expectations and proposed strategies for how the Centre would foster intergenerational interaction. Once these documents were approved through the University's Ethics Committee, a list of potential interviewees was compiled. This list of stakeholders - totalling 30 - was extracted from attendance information in the Programme and Project Board meeting minutes. Initial contact with all stakeholders involved in these boards was made to discuss their potential involvement and interest in being interviewed.

In order to test out the topic guide, pilot interviews were conducted with two staff members from another centre in London that was also attempting to adopt an 'intergenerational approach' to its daily working practices. These two staff members were in similar management positions to a number of the stakeholders I would be interviewing in terms of their influence on policy and strategy development, and their involvement in the daily running of their centre. These interviews proved helpful but I quickly realised that some of the questions were repetitive and drawing the same answers. As a consequence, the topic guide for the main fieldwork was shortened and made more succinct.

Before the main interviews were conducted, I discussed informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity with each participant, and highlighted the possible ways in which the data may be used: in the research study itself; in presentations

at conferences; and in journals or other publications. I reminded each participant of their right to stop the interview at any time; to ask for the audio recorder to be switched off, and/or to withdraw from the study at any time (whether it was during or after the interview). All interviewees for the main fieldwork were also provided with a hard copy of the information sheet, as well as an electronic copy emailed individually along with a consent form prior to the interview taking place

All potential interviewees (members of the Programme and Project Boards, as well as the architects) were contacted and asked to participate by both myself and the Centre's Programme Lead. Of the 30 people contacted, seven declined as they were either no longer in that position or working for the Council, or because time or scheduling constraints meant they were unavailable to interview. A total of 23 interviews were completed between February and June 2010, yielding 17 hours of interview transcripts. Each interview was digitally recorded, except for one interview when the digital recorder battery expired and hand written notes were taken instead. The majority of interviews were conducted on the premises of Merton Council, in the main building of the Civic Centre. However, for the convenience of three stakeholders, interviews were also held either at their place of work or when they were visiting the Centre.

Transcriptions of each interview were done by an outside agency, but all transcribed interviews (see appendix 5 for an example of a transcribed interview) were read through thoroughly a number of times and checked against the audio recordings for accuracy by myself (as the researcher). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) note that information or comments made before an interview is often lost. I

therefore tried to include any conversation or comments that were made before the interview took place by referring back to those conversations in the actual interview and asking participants to elaborate or repeat. I also did my best to capture these comments by allocating time directly after the interview to make specific notes about the interview process in my fieldwork journal.

5.6 Observation

Observation of how the Centre promoted interaction between participants consisted of a combination of unstructured observation of stakeholder meetings and special events related to the development and publicity of the Centre, as well as structured observations within the Centre.

From November 2008 to January 2010 I attended and observed a range of stakeholder meetings – approximately 20 - pertaining to the development of the Centre; including project management and networking meetings, consultations and reference group meetings, building design and planning meetings with the architects, and discussions of service design possibilities with various interested and potential Centre users. As a non-participant observer during these meetings, I took field notes (during and after the meeting) that made note of such factors as: who was, and was not attending; power dynamics between stakeholders and how this played out in terms of decision making; attendees' understanding of what taking an intergenerational approach might mean; and what purpose they envisaged for the Centre.

In addition, as has already been noted, my study was concerned with the processes involved in developing a Centre rather than the impact of Centre activities alone. As a result, and instead of producing my own observation tool, the original plan was to pilot the use of the newly developed (American) Intergenerational Observation Scale (IOS) (Jarrott, 2008) designed to capture the level of interactive behaviours between generations, but in a UK context. Alongside the IOS, I considered various other scales used within the intergenerational field to observe interactions between the generations (Jarrott, Smith and Weintraub, 2008; Epstein and Boisvert, 2006; Jarrott, Gigliotti and Smock, 2006; Newman, Morris and Streetman, 1998).

Most studies I reviewed used highly structured observation scales. For example, Epstein and Boisvert (2006) developed a scale for evaluating the intergenerational setting, including the programme schedule and staff behaviours, with a focus on interactions between and within generations. This scale used an 'Intergenerational Involvement' and 'Interaction Inventory' measurement tool, but this measurement was based solely on formal structured activities in a specific and pre-determined space where these activities were being delivered (Epstein and Boisvert, 2006). While this scale was developed to assess the impact of a programme upon the involvement and interaction of older and younger people, my study aimed to explore the level and nature of the interactions - including the impact of the environment. A further aim of my study was to also look at *unstructured* activities and services, as well as at the interactions which might occur in the *informal spaces* within the Centre. Neither of these elements was captured in Epstein and Boisvert's scale. By contrast, Newman, Morris and Streetman (1998) have long

advocated for the use of the Elder-Child Interaction Analysis (ECIA) instrument. This was specifically designed to record verbal and non-verbal interactions between children and their teachers. However, this observation scale was only used within a school setting and focused solely on a dyad of one younger person and their teacher.

At the time I began my study, it was anticipated that Jarrott's (2008) newly developed Intergenerational Observation Scale might be applicable to my study. Jarrott, Smith and Weintraub (2008) developed the IOS to capture social behaviours and exhibited affect between older adults and children participating in a single intergenerational programme. The scale was developed and tested in a Child Development Centre where researchers gathered qualitative observations of intergenerational programming involving Adult Day Services participants and Child Development Centre children (Jarrott, Smith and Weintraub, 2008). It was then developed into a structured observation schedule to help researchers and professionals to collect data and consider how well a particular activity supports social interaction and positive affect between the generations, or within a single generation group. The scale is used during a programmed activity rather than during periods of transition or rest. Observers using the scale must focus on the target participant's behaviours, affect, and level of engagement. Observers identify up to five participants to observe, watching each in turn throughout the duration of an activity. The scale's three-step observer training process demonstrated good scale reliability (Jarrott, Smith and Weintraub, 2008). Since then, the scale has been used mainly in similar settings (i.e. adult or child day care settings). It was

thought that my study might offer an opportunity to explore the scale's utility in a very different setting and culture.

As a result, and during the first year of my studentship, I completed training in the use of the IOS. After training was complete, I began to pilot the use of the scale in the Centre by practicing live coding intermittently over a three-week period (in Sept 2010). The scale was piloted during both unstructured observation times and during more formal and structured events at the Centre. Furthermore, I piloted and discussed the potential use of the IOS as an observation technique at the Centre with Professor Sheila Peace, an expert in environmental gerontology. Professor Peace specialises in the impact of the built environment and, with colleagues, had recently completed an important study on intergenerational use of public spaces (Holland et al., 2007).

During my piloting of the IOS in the Centre, I found that while the scale does 'count' intergenerational interaction that occurs within structured intergenerational activities, it does not take into account other variables pertinent to my study such as *who* was not present or *how unstructured* space and activities may foster or inhibit interaction. Moreover, the scale assumes that activities occurring during observation are intergenerational in nature, and that it is only the participants and activities that influence outcomes. What the scale does not do is provide a mechanism for observing and/or noting how the generations *use space* or *interact with* their environment.

Moreover, the IOS is based primarily on observation of dyads (two generations) participating in an activity together where the primary focus is to foster intergenerational interaction. Staff are present to facilitate such an interaction. Unfortunately, this scenario rarely happened at the Centre during my pilot observation time(s). The most common activities in the Centre were group-based and any stimulus materials or resources were for the whole group to use rather than just dyads. In addition, staffing levels were such that there was, at most, only one facilitator present – and sometimes none. To date, the IOS has mainly been used in a specific controlled setting such as day care, with very young children and frail older adults. By contrast, the Centre I was studying aimed to attract a range of ages and participants were mainly relatively active and healthy older adults and school aged children from the adjacent schools. The IOS has also been used and tested with non-familial dyads whereas my pilot observations of the Centre revealed quite a lot of familial intergenerational interaction and use of the Centre's spaces.

Drawing together what I had learnt from reviewing other tools, and having been trained in the use of – and piloted – the IOS, I concluded that, for this study, I would best be served by developing my own observation tool – but a tool which was informed by my review and practical experience.

5.6.1 Development and piloting of the observation tool

In order to do so, I planned a further period of observation at the Centre, specifically focussed on developing my own tool. I began with observations of

Centre users' behaviours over a two-day period, for four hours each day, and by simply making notes. Situating myself in the lobby of the Centre, I observed Centre users' interactions with one another and individual behaviours in 20 minute intervals over a designated four hour period. This did not produce sufficient information initially so I adapted and extended the observation periods to 30 minutes before and after scheduled activities, services and events, both in the lobby and in other places in the Centre (i.e. activity and exercise rooms), and for an additional two days.

Using information collected over this period, my experience from earlier site visits, my piloting of the IOS, and previous knowledge about the use of observation scales within the intergenerational field, I concluded that my own observation tool would need to address four general themes and/or questions:

1. Who was accessing the Centre (i.e. age, gender, relationship to users accompanying them to, or meeting at, the Centre)?
2. Why was the Centre being used (for a scheduled or drop-in activity or service, as a first visit, other)?
3. How were spaces being used in the Centre (i.e. patterns and direction of movement, how furniture is used, etc)?
4. What was the nature of interaction between Centre users (familial/non-familial, staff, intergenerational)?

Additionally, there were two other dimensions that would need to be included in my schedule:

1. Observation of both structured and unstructured spaces in the Centre (lobby and allocated spaces for specific activity).
2. Observation around (before and after) and during scheduled and unscheduled intergenerational activities and services.

One notable technique that informed the observation tool I developed was Kaplan's (2007) use of mental maps to assess intergenerational participants' understanding of their environment and potential level of interaction with other generations. Kaplan's (2007) use of behaviour mapping as a systematic way of recording people's locations (i.e. where they sit, how often they use equipment) informed my decision to include drawings of the Centre lobby and furniture arrangements in an attempt to map out 'patterns of traffic' in the Centre's main space (lobby), as well as how and where individuals used the furniture and equipment in the Centre.

Incorporating the themes and questions noted above, I drafted an observation tool to be piloted in the Centre. Professor Sheila Peace kindly agreed to meet with me at the Centre and help pilot the observation tool for an hour. Professor Peace provided me with verbal feedback and I then undertook an additional eight hours of observation a day later, making notes about the 'workability' of the tool. These

notes and feedback led me to make a few further alterations including: creating more space on the sheet for describing observations in more detail – i.e. not just marking the number of behaviours observed, but adding a section for general comments that were pertinent to what was being observed; and including space to note other factors to help describe ‘who’ individuals were (i.e. ethnicity and disability) - see appendix 6 for the final observation guide used in my study.

5.6.2 The main observation period

After my observation tool was piloted and changes made, I used the Centre’s monthly calendar of events (see Appendix 7) – a written schedule posted monthly in the Centre that details all activities taking place - to decide *when* to observe potential interaction between Centre users. At this point, the Centre had been officially open for one month (and, unofficially, for approximately four months). It was decided to engage in observation on two consecutive days per week, using a rotating schedule over a 16 week period. For example, Monday/Tuesday one week followed by Tuesday/Wednesday the next week, Wednesday/Thursday the next, and so on. Whenever possible, priority was given to scheduling observation during the middle of the week because the majority of potential intergenerational activities and services were scheduled on those days.

A minimum of four hours was spent in the Centre on any given day, with observation times selected before, after and during potential intergenerational activities and/or services. Observation before and after each activity or service was scheduled for one hour, with observation of the actual event dependent on the

length of the activity (minimum of 1 hour, maximum of 2 hours). Decisions about what to observe were based on the activities listed in the Centre's monthly calendar of events as well as supplementary leaflets and posters displayed in the Centre and online. Determining what constituted a 'potential intergenerational activity' was based on the brief descriptions provided in these various documents and on discussions with Centre staff. Consequently, I observed only activities and services that had the potential for intergenerational interaction. For example, if an activity was restricted to a specific age or target group (i.e. when the activity was listed 'for children only', or the service was a breast feeding clinic), or stated that you must have a child to attend (i.e. Family & Friends Play Session or the Child Health Clinic which noted that all attendees must have a child under the age of 5), then these activities and services were excluded from my observations. Essentially, all generations needed to be able to have access to the activity or service in order for it to be included.

Using the tool, I undertook a total of 130 hours of observations. Approximately eight hours of allocated observation time was cancelled due to bad weather conditions, staff illness, and very low or no attendance at particular activities. I was present in the Centre on a weekly basis over a five month period from November 2010 to March 2011. Alongside my observations, I also took monthly photographs of the Centre and wrote descriptions of the Centre's floor plan including changes in furniture (layout), wall hangings and items exhibited in the lobby. As with the interviews, I also continued to keep simultaneous notes in my field diary reflecting on the work I was doing and on emerging themes and issues which would inform the presentation of my findings.

5.7 Ethical Issues

As noted in Chapter 4, a study of this nature raises a number of ethical issues and concerns. These relate to both the roles and responsibilities of me, as the primary researcher, and to the way in which the research was conducted with all participants at the particular research site used. Good ethical practice in research dictates that the researcher conducts their research in accordance with ethical codes, and that their research has been reviewed and approved by an ethics committee for its ethical soundness (Flick, 2009). Accordingly, a 'position paper' outlining my roles and responsibilities as the researcher when working with both my supervisors and outside individuals and agencies, was drafted and circulated to all involved (see appendix 8). In addition, my research was undertaken with reference to the ESRC Research Ethics Framework (Economic and Social Research Council, 2010), has abided by the British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice (British Sociological Association, 2002) and followed the Social Research Association's Code of Practice for Social Researchers (Social Research Association, 2004). The initial proposal and research design for the study was submitted and approved in November 2009 by Keele University's Research Ethics Committee and support for the study was also provided by Merton Council.

Codes of ethics are formulated to regulate the relations of researchers to the people and settings they plan on studying (Flick, 2009). Crucial to this was ensuring that participants were made aware of what my study was about (Flick, 2009). This included providing information sheets about my study to all stakeholders and potential interviewees. As noted earlier, I also explained my

study in person at meetings and with staff at the Centre. The study did involve observing participants who may have been unaware that they were being observed. However, an effort was made to respect participants' privacy, values and psychological well-being. For example, nothing was recorded – either digitally or by video – only field notes were taken, together with the completion of the observation tool. Moreover, in cooperation with, and contingent on the approval of, Merton Council, staff at the Centre were notified of all times when I was present in the Centre. Permission from Merton Council to be in the Centre was granted before observation took place and an information sheet was presented to all those involved so that they had a clear understanding of the questions that this study would address prior to my allocated time of fieldwork. Whilst no absolute guarantees of confidentiality could be given, every effort was made to disguise the identity of individuals. This included avoiding any attribution of comments, in reports or presentations, to identified or observed participants.

In addition to an information sheet about the study, consent forms were provided to all potential interviewees. Along with the invitation to participate, information sheets and consent forms were sent in advance to all potential participants explaining: why they had been chosen; what would happen if they took part; who was organising the research; as well as a reminder that taking part was entirely voluntary. Immediately before the interview was due to commence, participants were invited to register their signed consent prior to involvement before turning on the recorder and starting the interview.

Whilst this was a straightforward process for the interviews, observations at the Centre presented other challenges. Even though many Centre users were aware that I was visiting the Centre in the role of a researcher, I cannot guarantee that they were all fully informed about the specific nature of my research and when exactly I was observing (them). Despite the fact that I used informed consent whenever possible, it would have been problematic to ask for the direct consent of those being observed in the Centre as this may have affected their behaviour.

5.8 Reflections on the Research

Throughout the study, I kept a reflective journal, or field diary. These notes were ongoing and recorded as soon as possible after each interview or observation, but also whenever I felt there was a need to comment or write on any given theme or issue that arose. I have made use of my field diary as part of the data, for analysis, and for noting a variety of issues and observations, including:

- The current and evolving state of the field of intergenerational practice over the period of my study;
- Non-verbal communication between stakeholders present during meetings;
- Any conflict of values or behaviours;
- Power relationships between stakeholders (and potentially myself);
- My own developing skills/abilities as a researcher;
- General observations on the research process;
- The physical environment around me (during my time in the Centre);

- My feelings during my time in the Centre (i.e. my general feeling/sense of the Centre);
- My perceived sense of the relevance or interest in intergenerational shared space(s) by stakeholders involved in the design, development and implementation of the Centre.

In the chapters which follow, I make reference back to entries in my field diary as and when appropriate.

5.9 Analysing the Data

Having described how I conducted my fieldwork, I now explain in detail the procedures used in managing and analysing my data. The first step in my analysis included familiarising myself with the data. This started early in the research process - when I starting collecting data during observation of stakeholder meetings, after stakeholder interviews, and during initial site visits to the Centre, when I was able to interpret and reflect on what I was observing.

Despite the fact that I had professional help in transcribing the majority of my interviews, I also needed to be as familiar as possible with the content of those interviews. Therefore, audio recordings of the interviews were listened to several times before passing them over for transcription and, once interviews were transcribed I listened to them again to make sure no errors were made during the transcription process. Early on, I transcribed two of the audio recordings myself to ensure I was familiar with the process.

In relation to my data set, thematic analysis was used as my primary analytic approach, whereby both the content and context of the data collected – written documents, transcribed interviews and observation notes, were analysed. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), there are a number of stages in the analysis process while Miller (2000) suggests that the purpose of analysis is to identify emerging themes, which then enable the researcher to link these themes to a more comprehensive model of what is found in the data. As noted in Chapter 4, I used Ritchie and Lewis's (2003) concept of an analytic hierarchy, the stages of which I reiterate here:

- Identifying initial themes or concepts
- Labelling or tagging data by concept or theme
- Sorting data by theme or concept (in cross sectional analysis)
- Identifying elements and dimensions, refining categories, classifying data
- Summarising or synthesising data
- Establishing typologies
- Detecting patterns
- Developing explanations
- Seeking applications to wider theory/policy strategies

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), a thorough review of the range and depth of the data is an essential starting point to analysis. With this in mind, I included my entire data set in the familiarisation process – the documents collected, interview transcripts, and observation sheets, together with the notes I had been making in my field diary. I read through all data collected a number of times to

become familiar with, and immerse myself in, my data. The familiarisation process continued until I felt confident that I understood the nuances of my data set and was familiar with the range of situations, activities, personnel and processes it captured.

It is important to note here that I deliberately chose to manually analyse the majority of my data as I wanted to work closely with it and to become familiar with, and fully understand, the context in which it was generated. I felt that computer assisted analysis would not allow me this intimacy and reflexivity with the data. While many people now use NVivo or similar tools to analyse their data, I felt more comfortable sitting with and going through my own data in its various physical forms (interview transcripts; observations sheets; documents; photographs etc). That said, I did use NVivo as an organisation tool once I had decided on a coding index.

Initial themes and concepts were identified by sitting with, and reading through, my data set numerous times until topics and themes began to emerge. As I worked through the data set, I manually wrote these emerging themes and concepts directly on them, as well as a series of general comments, statements and observations to inform my ongoing analysis. This list of initial themes was then written out on a number of large pieces of paper in order to log them as they emerged. During this stage of my analysis, I tried not to impose my own ideas on the data and, as such, tried to keep very close to the language used in the data collected. I then went through this extensive list of initial themes, deleting all duplicate and insignificant or irrelevant ones, and refining and summarising them.

Once this initial list was complete, I attempted to construct what Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 222) call 'a manageable index'. I achieved this by identifying links between the emerging themes throughout the data set and then grouping and sorting them under a smaller number of broader, main themes (see appendix 9 for the original list of themes). At this point, I then took a step back from the data and discussed these themes in more detail with my supervisory team. This then resulted in the compilation of a more definitive list which formed the basis of my final index. Although the overall index contains 26 subthemes, they are grouped under just 8 main themes (see appendix 10 for a final list of themes). This list was then compared and cross referenced with my original one; using a colour coding system I went back through my extensive list of initial themes and concepts to make sure that all of them were included in the final index.

Alongside this, I had additional data from my observation sheets – some of which was amenable to thematic analysis and some of which allowed me to note quantitative data such as the frequency of particular behaviours and activities. For example, I was able to note who was using the Centre by age, gender, and relation to other Centre users. I was also able to note why and how people were using the Centre, as well as the types and levels of interaction between Centre users and incorporate these findings in my thematic analysis. Once these themes were established, I then went through each observation sheet and noted the frequency of these occurrences.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), the next step involves using the list of themes generated and applying it to the raw data through a process called

'indexing'. Once this has been done it is then possible to order segments of the data such that similar content within, and across, the data sets can be seen and considered together. It was at this juncture that I used NVivo to simultaneously apply my index systematically to the whole data set and organise the data in a meaningful way. This also enabled me to summarise the data and to bring it together in order to present it in the following chapters.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the fieldwork undertaken for my study. I have explained how I set about gathering the data, including conducting interviews with stakeholders, observation of important meetings and special events, and user interactions in the Centre; whilst also maintaining field notes and collecting documents in order to answer my research questions. I have also described the strategies used for coding and analysing the varied data I collected.

Arising out of the process of analysis, I have organised the presentation and discussion which follows into four findings chapters. Drawing on the findings from the range of documentary materials I collected, I begin with a scene setting chapter (Chapter 6) which looks briefly at the history and development of what is now called the Acacia Intergenerational Centre. The findings arising from my thematic analysis across the data sets is then presented in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 when I consider, in turn, the:

- Development of the Centre
- Design of the Centre

- Delivery of the Centre

Throughout all four findings chapters, the analysis and presentation is supported by quotations from documents and research participants and, where appropriate, by images taken as part of the visual record of the Centre's development.

Chapter 6

Setting the Scene



Photo 6.1: The Acacia Intergenerational Centre

6.1 Introduction

This first findings chapter sets the scene for the other three findings chapters by looking briefly at the history and development of what is now called the Acacia Intergenerational Centre - the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre. Drawing on the range of documentary materials I collected, I look at the London Development Agency's vision for such a centre; at the origins of this vision; and at how the bid process was framed. I then look at the bidding process itself and at

how the chosen borough of Merton proposed to develop the Centre. As part of setting the scene, I also present a brief socio-demographic profile of Merton and provide the reader with some sense of the area in which the Centre has been located.

6.2 The Vision

Driven by increasing concerns about the generations becoming more isolated from one another and reinforced by different groups feeling they were competing with each other for resources, for public space(s) and to get their voices heard, the London Development Agency (LDA) in partnership with the Greater London Authority was tasked by the then Mayor of London (Ken Livingstone) to look at innovative ways of addressing these issues. The eventual proposal and specification document drawn up by the LDA brought together two strategic mayoral papers: one about child care *The London Childcare Strategy - Towards affordable good quality childcare for all* (GLA, 2003) and the other about older people - *Valuing Older People -The Mayor of London's Older People Strategy* (GLA, 2006).

The London Childcare Strategy (GLA, 2003) was an initiative for the development, expansion, implementation and sustainability of affordable childcare services in London. It offered an analysis of family incomes and working patterns and addressed the role of affordable childcare in tackling barriers to employment and helping bring families out of poverty. The LDA suggested that it could play a key role in delivering *The London Childcare Strategy* by devoting substantial resources

for childcare in their investment programme, an overall investment plan by the LDA noted in *The London Development Agency and London Borough of Merton Grant Agreement* (LDA, 2009).

This was of particular significance given the then Labour Government's pledge to have a Sure Start Centre in every community by 2010, with a further investment of £351 million by 2010 (LDA, 2009). Sure Start was originally a Government initiative aimed at giving children the best possible start in life through improvement of childcare facilities, early education opportunities, and health and family support services, with an emphasis on community development (1998). The *Every Child Matters - Change for Children* (HM Government, 2004) policy document proposed a switch from comprehensive Sure Start local programmes to the creation of Sure Start Children's Centres. These were to be controlled by local authorities and the aim was to have 3,500 Children's Centres in place across the country by 2010. The Sure Start Children's Centre programme (1998) was based on the belief that integrated education, care, family support, health services and support with employment, are key factors in determining good outcomes for children and their parents and they provided integrated services, advice and support for young children and their families.

By contrast, *The Older People Strategy* (GLA, 2006) outlined the Mayor's commitment to ensuring that older Londoners, and future generations, respond positively to an ageing society and have the support they need to live independent, active and healthy lives. Moreover, the strategy suggested that an ageing population presents both challenges and opportunities for local government and

wider society. Accordingly, the LDA suggested that developing an intergenerational centre might be one way of combining elements of both the childcare and older people's strategies and achieving positive outcomes such as reducing ageism and negative stereotyping between the generations (LDA, 2009). The LDA's proposal was for the development of a capital project: for an intergenerational centre that would be "a pioneering launch pad for many more Centres across the country" (LDA, 2009: 72). By providing capital funding to the sum of £1.5 million, the LDA aimed to support the establishment of a new centre "providing a range of shared services and facilities under one roof for older people, children as well as families" (LDA, 2009: 72). By merging activities and facilities for older and younger people, the LDA anticipated that a centre would help break down barriers and improve educational attainment, reduce crime and provide a better sense of community spirit and well-being. A belief that a centre could be a source of support for all generations is seen clearly in the (then) Mayor of London Ken Livingstone's comments:

"I want the first intergenerational centre in London to be a resource for all age groups, old and young, for families and for individuals. The new Centre's aim is to break down barriers between people of different generations, challenge ageism and generate a sense of shared purpose bringing together and benefitting all members of the community" (Greater London Authority news release, 2007).

Working in partnership with the (then) Department of Children, Schools and Families, the LDA proposed that one specific aim of an intergenerational centre would be to operate a registered day care facility in the building that offered a

secure and safe environment for children (LDA, 2009). They expected the successful bidders to provide what were termed 100 (Mayoral) childcare spaces (equating to 40 full day care places) along with financial provision for 20 child minders.

The selected London borough would be required to develop the project through its Children's Centre programme and no additional capital or revenue funding was to be made available from the LDA for the construction or sustainability of the project. Given that only capital funding was to be provided at the outset, demonstrating how financial sustainability was to be achieved was specified as a key priority for the winning London borough. The successful borough was expected to provide evidence of, and a commitment to, providing revenue funding for at least the first three years of operation. Nevertheless, once complete, the LDA expected the centre to be available for "all residential community users that reside or have employment within the borough" (LDA, 2009:74). In addition, private, voluntary and independent sectors were also expected to play an important role in the development of the centre.

6.3 The Bidding and Commissioning Process

Below, I detail the development of Merton's bid but, before doing so, I very briefly outline the timetable and key dates against which Merton's bid can be set and provide a brief socio-demographic profile of the borough.

- July 2007: Denise Burke, the (then) Head of Childcare at the LDA officially announces their intention to support the development of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre and invites all interested London boroughs to apply for £1.5 million of capital funding.
- October 2007: 10 expressions of interest (EOI) are received. EOIs are distributed to the LDA steering group (approximately 16 individuals) who score them on a basis of A-C. Merton is one of four London boroughs shortlisted and asked to provide a more detailed submission with supplementary information within one month.
- December 2007: Proposals from the four shortlisted boroughs are provided to the steering group who then grade each proposal individually, followed by a group discussion. Two boroughs are ruled out at this stage. Two (including Merton) go through to the next round.
- January 2008: Representative(s) from both Children and Adult Services from the two remaining boroughs are invited to give a presentation (maximum 20 minutes) to the steering group, followed by a question and answer session. Merton is selected to receive the award but both boroughs are asked to place an embargo on the news until an announcement is made by the Mayor of London.

- February 2008: the Greater London Authority (on behalf of the Mayor and the LDA) issues a press release stating that Merton has been awarded funding to develop the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre.

6.3.1 The London Borough of Merton

Merton is a borough in south-west London formed, in 1965, from the merger of the Municipal Boroughs of Wimbledon and Mitcham, together with the Merton and Morden Urban District. Merton is divided into 20 wards and, at the 2011 Census, had a resident population of 199,700. It is predicted that in 2020 Merton's population will rise to 239,600 (Office for National Statistics, 2011). In 2011, 35% of the population of the borough was from an ethnic minority, with the highest ethnic populations recorded in wards in the east of the borough – which is where the council proposed to site the intergenerational centre (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The percentage of population from ethnic minorities is predicted to rise across the borough within the next decade. According to the council's comparative assessment of wards, the most deprived wards within the borough were also in the south and east where unemployment rates, educational attainment and quality of health were worst. The most affluent wards were in the north and west of the borough (London Borough of Merton, 2010).

6.3.2 Merton's Bid

At the time of the LDA call in July 2007, Merton Council was engaged in developing a number of Children's Centres. The Eastfields Children's Centre (in

the east of the borough, in Figge's Marsh ward) had received planning permission and was due to open in 2008. The council decided that if they could secure additional funding through the LDA initiative, this would provide them with the opportunity to enhance their proposed developments in the area. They therefore proposed in their initial expression of interest that the new intergenerational centre would be built alongside the newly commissioned Children's Centre, and that both centres would be designed with complementary and shared spaces and facilities.

The initial expression of interest – and the subsequent development of the bid - involved key stakeholders in the locality and service providers alongside the council. This included representatives from both Children's and Adult's services, from the Primary Care Trust, health services, the police, from further education, and from the voluntary and community sectors (London Borough of Merton - Intergenerational Centre application, 2007). Their stated intention was that Children, Schools and Families Services, and Adult Services, would work together on the intergenerational centre and develop the project through a small task group (London Borough of Merton - Intergenerational Centre application, 2007). In addition, management of the overall facility would be through a steering committee comprising representatives from those groups and organisations who had helped develop the bid.

As noted above, Merton was one of four shortlisted boroughs invited to send in a more detailed application by November 2007. Although this contained sufficient supplementary information for the borough to get through to the next round, the steering group felt that there were still a number of issues and questions that

needed to be addressed and answered more specifically. As a consequence, representatives from both Children and Adult Services were invited to give a 20 minute presentation to the steering group in January 2008. Following this, it was agreed that the grant should be awarded to Merton who, in the words of the steering group had demonstrated “great enthusiasm and vision for the centre and a real commitment to ensure that the development would become a centre of intergenerational excellence” (LDA, 2009).

In addition to the £1.5 million capital funding from the LDA, Merton allocated a further £900k in Children’s Centre Capital funding and £300k in Local Authority funding for the project. They also expected other funding to come from grants and further funding bids. Most recently – and as will be seen in later chapters - this has included funding to develop a staffed adventure playground within the Centre’s grounds. Thus, the eventual total capital investment for the new Centre was approximately £3.5 million - funded by the London Development Agency, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Sure Start Children’s Centre’s Programme and Play Pathfinder funding streams), and Merton Council.

6.3.3 The Acacia Intergenerational Centre

As noted above, it was proposed – and later agreed – that the intergenerational centre would be sited in Figge’s Marsh ward: the fourth smallest ward and one of the most deprived areas in Merton and where the council had already committed significant resources (London Borough of Merton, 2010).

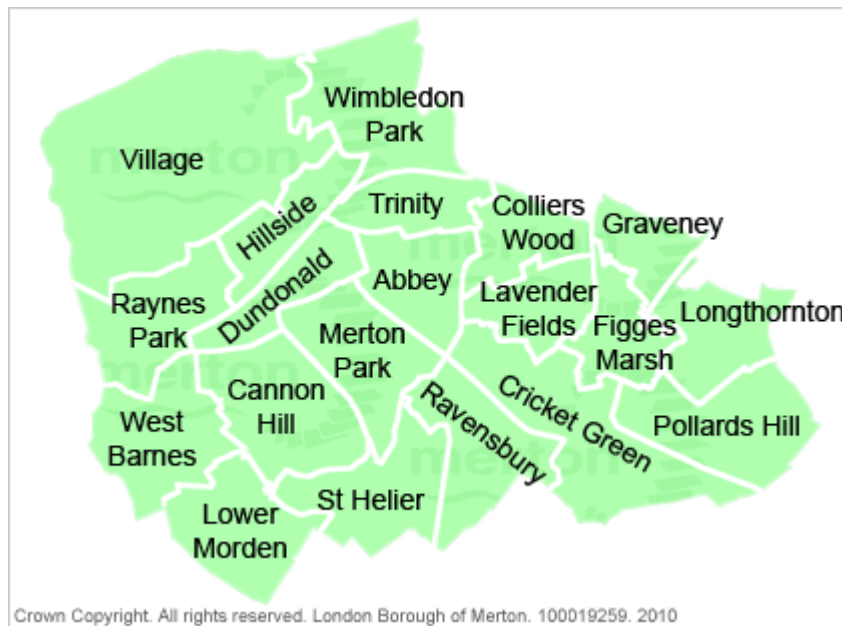


Figure 6.1 – Ward map for the London Borough of Merton

The ward is notable for its below average levels of income, qualifications and skilled residents, and higher levels of benefit claimants (London Borough of Merton, 2010). The 2001 census shows that nearly four tenths (39.45%) of its 9896 residents are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and it is the ward with the second highest number of households comprising lone parents with dependent children (London Borough of Merton, 2010). In 2001, data also showed that Figge’s Marsh had the highest rates of drugs offences, robbery, sexual offences and violence against the person, ranking top for each category in the borough (London Borough of Merton, 2010).

Only 11% of the population were aged 65 and over at the 2001 census and female life expectancy is 80.1 years compared with male life expectancy of 74.3 years (London Borough of Merton, 2010). Figge’s Marsh is one of the most deprived

wards in the borough with an average annual household income estimated at £22,355 , the lowest in Merton; male life expectancy the lowest in the borough (the highest is 82.3 years in Village ward) and 15.8% of the population having a long-term limiting illness (above the Merton average of 13.8%) (London Borough of Merton, 2010). The annual residents' survey of 2009 showed that while nearly three quarters of residents had a positive view of their neighbourhood and 53% of residents feel they can influence decision affecting their local area, they were most worried about anti-social behaviour, followed by fear of crime (London Borough of Merton, 2010).

There are two primary schools and one secondary school in the ward and, as noted earlier, the Merton bid suggested that the new intergenerational centre would complement both the proposed Children's Centre and the schools, and "serve as a hub from which to coordinate intergenerational activity across the borough" (London Borough of Merton - Intergenerational Centre application, 2007). The site on which the new Centre was to be based was a disused youth centre and motorbike track, located next to the secondary school and one of the primary schools. Figge's Marsh is also served by a number of transport links, and a new (overground) train station was completed adjacent to the site of the Centre in May, 2009.

6.4 Conclusion: development, design and delivery

As can be seen from this brief overview, the bidding and decision-making process happened relatively quickly and took only seven months from initial announcement

to final award. Detailed discussion of the development, design and delivery of the Centre – drawing on interview, documentary and observational data - is given in the next three chapters. In order to introduce these analyses, I conclude this chapter with a chronology of how the Centre was developed, constructed and publicised. This is presented in Figure 6.2 and in various linked appendices.

Date	
March 2008	Funding is announced for the IGC by the LDA.
March 2008	Architects Curl la Tourelle, preferred providers already established with Merton Council are commissioned to design the building and consultations began on the kinds of facilities and services the Centre might include.
April 2008	Project and Programme Boards are established and a series of regular meetings were begun to oversee the development (see Appendix 6.1 for details)
May 2008	A programme of consultation meetings is established: the first public meeting is held at the local secondary school - St. Mark's Academy, May 15 th .
July 2008	First meeting of Reference Group of interested stakeholders takes place (see appendix 6.2 for details).
March 2009	Planning Permission for the site is granted. Centre Manager is recruited.
June 2009	Work begins on site with the removal of tires and derelict building.
July 2009	Construction began with the contractors (Mansells) levelling the ground in preparation for the arrival of the prefabricated building's modular units (built at a factory in East Yorkshire by Premier Interlink Ltd.).
Sept 2009	Modular units delivered and installed.
Oct 1 st , 2009	Boris Johnson (the new Mayor of London) visits the site to bury a time capsule containing the ideas and aspirations of local people for intergenerational relations in Merton, alongside other local treasures to preserve them for future generations.

	The Mayor's visit to the site solidifies the Coalition Government's commitment to the (development of the) project.
Nov 2009	The building is deemed watertight and work on the interior starts.
Jan 2010	The building is virtually complete and fitted out, but severe weather causes a slight delay to the external landscaping.
Feb 2010	<p>Following a public vote, the new Centre is officially named the Acacia Intergenerational Centre – February 5th.</p> <p>The Centre officially opens to the public with a community open day – February 19th.</p>
September 4 th 2010	The Centre's new adventure playground and horticultural garden spaces open to the public.

Figure 6.2: A chronology of the development the Acacia Intergenerational Centre

Chapter 7

Development of the Centre

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 set the context for my examination of the development, design and delivery of the Centre by exploring the London Development Agency's vision for an intergenerational centre and how the London borough of Merton was chosen. In this chapter, I move on to explore stakeholder expectations and their proposed strategies for how the Centre would promote intergenerational work and involve both older and younger people in the area it serves. Crucial to this study was interviewing key stakeholders who contributed to the establishment of the Centre. The aim of these interviews, along with an analysis of a wide range of documents, was to shed light on the processes and decision-making behind the Centre's establishment. Findings presented in this chapter aim to answer two of my original research questions:

- In what ways has the Centre sought to involve and engage older adults and young people of varying ages and needs?
- To what extent has the research evidence been taken into account by the developers and designers of the Centre?

I begin by examining stakeholders' experience, expertise and role in the development of the Centre. Next, why the London Borough of Merton and the local

council were interested in such an endeavour, and why they were chosen to take this idea forward are considered. I then turn to look at how stakeholders proposed that the Centre would be managed and delivered, and what role was envisaged for users. The extent – or not – to which stakeholders drew on existing research and best practice is also explored, as is their understanding of what constitutes intergenerational practice or intergenerational approaches.

Project Board	Job title/role	Organisation
	Project Manager	London Borough of Merton (LBM)**
	Chair/Project Sponsor	LBM**
	Capital Programme Manager	LBM**
	Ward Member	LBM
	Ward Member	LBM
	Early Years/Children's Centre	LBM
	Early Years/Children's Centre	LBM
	Early Years/Children's Centre	LBM
	Intergenerational Champion	LBM
	0-12 Integrated Services Manager	LBM**
	Extended Services	LBM
	Stakeholder - Third Sector representative	St Marks Family Centre
	Stakeholder - School representative	St Marks Academy
	Head of Service, Education	LBM

	Primary Care Trust	LBM**
	Youth Provision	LBM
	Stakeholder - Older Person Theme Group	LBM
	Intergenerational Centre Manager	LBM
	Capital Project Manager	LBM
	Extended Schools & Workforce Development Manager	LBM
	Stakeholder – School representative	Lonesome Primary School
Programme Board	Job title/role	Organisation
	Programme Sponsor (Chair)	LBM
	Programme Sponsor (Chair)	LBM
	Stakeholder - Health Representative	Sutton & Merton Primary Care Trust - LBM
	Stakeholder - Health Representative	Sutton & Merton Primary Care Trust - LBM
	Stakeholder - Third Sector representative	MVSC
	Stakeholder - Third Sector representative	MVSC
	Communications	LBM
** sits on both Project & Programme Boards		

Table 7.1 – List of stakeholder's job titles/role and affiliated organisation

7.2 Stakeholders: their role and expertise

Stakeholder's current job titles and roles during the development of the Centre were traced in order to present a summary of the professional background of

stakeholders involved in the project (see Table 7.1). As can be seen, the majority of stakeholders involved were from the council, with only a select few representing the voluntary sector or other third sector organisations. Of the stakeholders working within the council, many had been solely involved with children's services, either through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) or Education. As Table 7.1 indicates, only one stakeholder, from a total of 30, was listed as a representative for older people. Additionally, it is worth noting that also missing from this list of stakeholders were older and younger people themselves, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities.

Similarly, it is important to explore what individual stakeholders' roles were in driving this project forward and consider what experience and expertise they brought to this process. Stakeholders' interest in the Centre, time available to contribute to the development of the Centre, the professional background of those individuals involved in the process, as well as their previous experience in delivering IP, are all highlighted. Overall, there was a varied range and level of interest in the Centre from stakeholders. Interest ranged from minimal involvement to a genuine interest and commitment to the development of the Centre. As one stakeholder - a Ward council member for Merton admits, involvement was based solely on his current work responsibilities:

“... because one of my clusters is East Mitcham, and the Intergenerational Centre is bang between two of my schools, quite important to be involved. So, that's why I was involved, because it's on my patch ...” (23)

Other stakeholders saw an opportunity to gain knowledge and information about the project that would help them with other work they were involved in at the council. As another Ward council member stated, it would be of direct benefit to her role:

“... I needed as much information as possible to know what was ... going on so I could tell, tell the residents what, what was going to happen.” (07)

Only a select few involved in the initial phase of drafting the bid were still members of the Project and Programme Boards once the bid was awarded. Consequently, most of the stakeholders interviewed had only become involved since the bid was won and the project started, which equated to approximately two years before interviews took place:

“... all the projects had been written and the scope and everything was sent to us then, so the bid had been successful at that stage ... that’s when I came on board then.” (06)

For many stakeholders, their seemingly limited involvement in the project occurred for several reasons, including: the impression that it was not a crucial part of their role; that they did not think they could provide any value to the project during the initial stage; or because they had no time to be involved. All of these reasons were

captured in comments made by the older person's representative on the Project Board:

“...I've attended some of the meetings... they've wanted to have that voice there ... the contribution I've been able to make has been pretty limited, because most of the project board meetings have been very much around nuts and bolts of the building ... a lot of, um, input went in on the children's side ... I think the needs for older people was not quite so obvious in the setup of the building ... I was there but you know, my contribution was pretty limited.” (11)

The majority of stakeholders involved with the development of the Centre had no previous experience in delivering intergenerational projects, either within the local council or through previous work experience. A number of stakeholders, when asked if they had been involved in any previous intergenerational projects, made comments such as:

“Not as such, no.” (2)

“Not at all.” (8)

“It is a new concept to me. It's interesting, but essentially... I think it was new to everybody.” (21)

Of the few who reported having some experience in a similar field, examples were brief and not explained in any detail:

“... I did oral history with, um, older people in Wandsworth in one of my first jobs as... in social care.” (11)

“I’ve dipped in and out of things that have an intergenerational focus to it but nothing that is, ah, an environment that’s purposeful for it.” (14)

“... some small projects around links between, um, voluntary organisations working with older citizens and schools in the past, but nothing of this order and scale really.” (09)

The development of the Centre involved a range of stakeholders representing a variety of political, personal and organisational interests. Accordingly, a number of stakeholders acknowledged the importance of balancing such diversity by including all interested parties in relation to both the focus and delivery of the Centre. However, this diversity also had a downside and stakeholders identified problems such as: stakeholder roles not always being clearly defined or communicated to Project and Programme Boards; the lack of stakeholder experience and time; debates and disagreements about who exactly should be involved in the process of developing the Centre; and difficulties in balancing stakeholders’ varied interest(s).

This is also reflected in the wider issue around project leadership, with concerns about who had responsibility to lead on different aspects of the project:

“... there’s been an issue about project leadership. I think that there’s the building project; who’s leading on the building project, who’s leading on the strategy ... there’s a whole layer of bureaucracy about different groups doing different things ...” (15)

A number of suggestions as to why there was a problem with project management were provided. For example, many suggested that stakeholders’ roles within the project were not clearly defined or communicated to one another. As one of the Project managers highlighted:

“There was a bit of a challenge I suppose about how, how we defined the roles within my team ... who was going to be doing what and which bits did we need to kind of consult back with and which bits did we not have to ...” (03)

Others felt that the problem was simply with the number of stakeholders involved in the process. As stated by one of the architects involved in the design of the Centre, too many stakeholders making decisions was problematic:

“It’s far too subjective and multi-headed client and decisions made and then somebody else would override that and we’d go back and forth ... as architects we

need to know our client very well and when you've got so many people involved then it's hard to manage your client in that way.” (17/18)

Equally, one voluntary sector representative was of the view that stakeholders' lack of experience may have been a reason for a breakdown in the management of the project:

“... mostly they were council workers ... a lot of them were pretty good in their own particular field, but it's actually asking a lot for somebody to sort of step out of their comfort zone and suddenly take on something different ... they're not exactly short of responsibilities in their day jobs ...” (09)

Similarly, there were some notable opinions about who should be involved in the process, from the range of stakeholders sitting on the project board to the engagement of the local community itself. As one stakeholder from the Early Years/Children's Centre team insists, it is about the balance of getting the correct people involved at the right time:

“... getting as many people around the table early on is important ... in the group you've got to have key people that can both think and deliver strategic stuff ... you've got to have people who have got the clout and the influence to make things happen.” (22)

Many believed that the variety of stakeholders on the Project Board was a positive achievement. As one stakeholder, a representative from one of the local schools suggests:

“Use as many people from different aspects as you can ... we had people from lots of different environments ... they were not all council employees, they took people from the private sector like myself ... other school teachers were involved.” (08)

However, others felt that the Project Board needed more local community representation:

“... at least a single person who’s closer to the ground and very much involved in the reality of it, involved a lot sooner ... somebody who is much more closely related to the local community and the needs of the local community.” (04)

The challenge of involving stakeholders from other departments within the local council and creating partnerships with voluntary groups directly linked to potential service users was also addressed by the Programme Sponsor:

“... it was a bit of a challenge ... getting some of the other council departments involved ...the children and, and voluntary groups and the people who work with elder people ...” (12)

Overall, involving potential users from the local community from the beginning of the project was seen as a crucial step lost in the management of this project. The notion of wanting to have a partnership with the community, rather than it being driven solely by representatives from the council, was clear:

“... it's got to come from the community ... Rather than ...council offices or council departments set up there saying, well, this is how you do it ... it's got to be sort of people coming in and saying... we could do something this way rather than having ways and methods of doing it imposed on them by, you know, on high.” (19)

7.3 Why Merton?

During interviews, stakeholders were asked to consider why Merton was interested in being the location for the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre and what factors they believed contributed to Merton being chosen over other local authorities in London bidding for this project. The answers to these questions drew out a number of interesting themes including: relevant policy drivers, factors unique to the London Borough of Merton, and funding.

Stakeholders' interest in the development of the Centre reflected a number of current policy drivers, notably those around community cohesion and broader agendas about social inclusion. The fit between the importance of these drivers

and developing the Centre is illustrated by a senior stakeholder responsible for the delivery of the Centre who states:

“... there were some good opportunities there in terms of bringing together probably some of the key themes and key priorities within the council ... it builds on the community cohesion agenda ... around social inclusion, and we’ve very much got an agenda here around narrowing the gap ...” (01)

Several stakeholders believed that the existence of an intergenerational centre could improve the lives of many citizens in the borough. For example, one stakeholder from the Early Years/Children’s Centre team stated:

“...we would be encouraged to look at opportunities to raise Merton Council’s profile, to develop opportunities that would take forward activities and outcomes for the citizens of Merton as well.” (15)

There were a number of features, specific to Merton council, that were raised as important for becoming the chosen borough and location for the Centre. This included the belief that Merton wrote and delivered a good bid and presentation:

“We have quite a number of various projects that are externally funded ... because we have capacity to deliver ... we can talk a good game ... we can write up a good bid and we can make a good presentation, which is what we did.” (02)

Some stakeholders spoke specifically about the council's confidence in their capacity to deliver such a project. One stakeholder from the Programme Board talked about the council's working partnerships with the voluntary sector as an important reason for being able to 'deliver' the Centre:

“... Merton's got quite a good track record of working with the third sector and the strong partnerships ... we have a bit of a track record of being able to deliver things and secure successful outcomes for projects that we've undertaken in the past.”
(09)

Similarly, another stakeholder who was proud of the Council's working relationships with external agencies stated:

“... being able to demonstrate some of the links that Merton has been able to establish working collaboratively with third sector partners, would have been a big pull” (05)

Both the location within the borough and the exact site the Centre was built on was seen as key to Merton being chosen. In particular, the location and available land was seen by a Project Board member from the Youth Provision Team as crucial in regenerating a deprived area which, to date, had attracted minimal funding:

“...it’s in an area of high deprivation, next to a primary school, next to an academy, that must have helped, on the railway station ... it’s an area which appeals, because it’s got so little infrastructure ... we had the land ... that makes it an awful lot easier, rather than, we’ve got an idea, but we’ve got to get planning commission, and we’ve got to get the land.” (16)

A number of stakeholders also suggested that there was an opportunistic element to why the council was interested in developing an intergenerational centre within their borough:

“... if there's a bit of money going, let’s kind of grab it and try and do something else in another bit of the borough”. (01)

The establishment of the Centre was proposed as an innovative and creative way of thinking and working by various stakeholders. In particular, many saw working ‘intergenerationally’ as a means of joining often dispersed services together:

“... there is a complete drive towards stop having silos as services and actually an intergenerational approach is an umbrella over a number of different services within a local authority... why it’s receiving a greater focus because it allows local authorities to stop working how they used to and adopt some different ways of working.” (02)

Thus, in summary, stakeholders were of the view that Merton was chosen because of a mixture of unique elements such as the location of the site; the council's interest in the community cohesion agenda and its existing work on the children's centre programme; as well as its existing partnerships with voluntary groups. Yet, there are other elements of the process that have also contributed to the development of the Centre, some of which will be explored in the following sections.

7.4 Concerns and Challenges

Concerns surrounding the financial sustainability of the intergenerational centre - noted specifically during project board meetings and stakeholder interviews - were prominent throughout the development of the Centre. The source(s) of funding available for the development were also of concern to many stakeholders. While the majority of stakeholders identified the primary source of funding coming from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) as problematic, others saw this as a potential to be more resourceful in delivering the Centre. One of the main issues repeatedly addressed throughout the duration of the Centre's development was the question of why only capital money to build the facility was made available. A Senior Project Manager suggested that no specific revenue streams were offered for developing centre services further:

“I don't think I could have changed this, but I think to go for ... a capital project without funding a revenue stream with it, I think is not very good.” (03)

In response to this question, a representative from the funding organisation responsible for providing the capital stated:

“I am a bad cop because we’re giving 1.5 million to a particular borough ... that’s a lot of money ... they have got to find alternative sources for financial sustainability ... This is your, your innovative programme that you bid in that you’ve been awarded. Your role is to sustain it.” (13)

As a consequence, there was concern amongst many stakeholders about how the decision to provide only capital funding might affect the immediate future of the Centre:

“... the absolute biggest challenge that there’s always been and still exists, is the long term revenue budget, of which there is none ... so rapidly establishing a sustainable revenue budget for the centre, however that’s done, is the absolute, always has been the biggest concern” (22)

Ideas about how to generate income as part of future funding were provided by many stakeholders during their interviews and observed during Programme and Project Board meetings where stakeholders were heard discussing these issues at length. For example, one stakeholder - a third sector representative on the Project Board suggested that providing ‘commercially’ based revenue may be essential:

“... that is the one thing that we have to think of any new building these days, is how do you get the revenue and perhaps there should have been a small commercial outlet or something there that would have actually helped run and helped link...” (09)

There were also ideas for income generation in a document written by Merton council that suggested a nursery could provide necessary income:

“Financial support could include capital funding of a nursery within a building, improvement of childcare facilities, extension of childcare facilities, ensuring facilities in new developments etc.” (Merton’s Intergenerational Project – Prospectus - January 2009)

In addition, many saw the fact that funding was coming from a children’s services budget, and not from a budget that was designated as an intergenerational one, as a major challenge:

“... it’s basically how we are using mainstream children’s centre funding, um, to have a broader brief ... whatever infrastructure is in place ... which is pretty limited ...” (23)

Similarly, because the project was being delivered solely through a local authority, many thought this would restrict the amount of outside funding available:

“... it may be financially pretty stuck so long as it stays in the local authority, because it limits its ability to bid for other money ... it might need to bid, like lots of community centres are. They benefit from being in the third sector ...” (16)

7.5 Management of the Centre

The subject of project management was seen as crucial to the development of the Centre. When stakeholders were asked to reflect on the process of developing and delivering such a unique Centre, many discussed the importance of having governance and management structures in place, spoke of the achievements and challenges involved, and offered advice to others wanting to embark on such an endeavour. Debates around the governance and management structure of the Centre can be seen in stakeholder interviews, in the minutes and during observation of Project Board meetings. The main consideration was whether the Centre – once it was built and open - should continue to be managed by the council themselves or another organisation, potentially from the voluntary sector. There were numerous, rather lengthy, discussions during Project Board meetings that considered these options:

“Models of governance are still under development, with the two main options being that of local authority provision or a commissioned and specified service from a Third Sector or other provider – these could be either local or national. Either option will provide an integrated service as agreed at the Programme Board on 31 October 2008. This will develop into a community run project over time,

and there could also be a capacity building brief for any provider to develop local Third Sector groups.” (Project Board Meeting Minutes - January, 2009)

A number of stakeholders, during their interviews, also expressed their own thoughts about who should manage the Centre:

“... the whole lot could be commissioned and run outside the council ... we could seek to procure a provider, who would then run it as a non-profit or whatever organisation. So there are plenty of options.” (04)

The importance of managing the development of the Centre from beginning to end was a common theme throughout stakeholder interviews. This can be seen in one stakeholder’s comments about the standard of project management:

“... I wasn’t overly impressed by the project management ... it’s not to be critical of the individuals concerned ... in the end one didn’t feel that there was a particularly cohesive, um, group ... I mean in the first couple of months there were regular meetings ... all the main stakeholders were supposed to be there, but actually none of them were.” (15)

There was some concern and confusion about whether the development of the Centre was being managed as a way of delivering a building, as a model of working, or both. This is evident in one stakeholder’s question about whether or not there was a need to have a new building:

“... I suspect there wasn’t that much thought about are we here building buildings or are we really embedding a way of working that is sustainable” (20)

Confusion is also seen in another stakeholder’s concern about the focus on delivering a building rather than a way of working ‘intergenerationally’:

“... we’re not just building a building ... the obvious theory is you wouldn’t bid for something unless you had already a strategy in place where this would fit ... you do need to develop ... the broader application of an intergenerational approach ... at the same time as being focused on delivering the building.” (01)

In reality though, throughout the development of the Centre, the major focus was on the construction of the physical building. This, for many, was to be their greatest achievement:

“For us it’s getting the building finished ... because that’s what we do. So, that’s it really, getting a building up and running.” (03)

That said, many stakeholders were equally concerned with the next phase of the development once the building of the Centre was complete:

“... this is just the end of the first phase, having got the building up and opened it, and there's an awful lot further to go.” (06)

The timeframe allocated for the design and development of the Centre was also a concern for some stakeholders. Many felt that more time was needed in order to examine potential options and outcomes. As one stakeholder from the Capital Programme Team suggested, this lack of time to make decisions would have an effect on the delivery of the Centre:

“... this was all supposed to be the fast track ... we were supposed to be on site within a ridiculously short amount of time, and open long before it actually did open ... that meant that there was, um, quite a serious curtailment of discussion.” (03)

Similarly, a lack of time was seen as a major challenge to thinking adequately about how to deliver intergenerational work in the Centre and throughout Merton:

“... it would be nice to have more time to think about the overall concept before you start rushing into the capital and build ... you got quite driven by capital, time scale ... the advice I've given to other places is, well, spend more time ...” (21)

Conversely, others saw benefit in having to work within a tight timescale. This is seen in one stakeholder's belief that maintaining such momentum throughout the entire project was a major accomplishment:

“... keeping it up to pace ... because it could have easily just slipped a bit and then you have a week here and week there and a day here ...” (07)

When asked what advice he would give to others interested in developing such a project, another stakeholder – from the Capital Programme team, remarked:

“... there wasn’t enough time for proper consultation, I think.” (19)

How potential Centre users were consulted or not, and how examples of best practice and research were utilised in the development of the Centre, are now issues I turn to below.

7.6 User Involvement

Here, I examine how stakeholders involved potential users during the development of the Centre. In this case, *users* refers to, and are considered in terms of, the potential generations and/or individuals the Centre aimed to serve. By contrast, a *Centre user* refers to an individual who makes use of the Centre (i.e. attends a support group or takes part in a dance class). Findings in this section demonstrate a level of uncertainty amongst many stakeholders about levels of user involvement; highlight challenges involved with engaging certain age groups; and raise questions about when users should be involved in such a project.

A considerable number of stakeholders were very uncertain about the extent to which users had or had not been involved in the development of the Centre, often referring to other people who would know better than themselves, or whose responsibility they thought it was to know:

“... I’m not sure I’m actually the best person to answer that one. I understand they were, but you’ll need to talk to others about that ...” (23)

“...it was for the local ward councillors to engage with the people because if that was in my ward I would be dealing with the people more I think.” (07)

Many stakeholders from the Project Board admitted that there had in fact been limited involvement of potential users of the Centre:

“I just can’t see much of a trail of that having happened before ... I can’t see the hard evidence to that.” (15)

A number of reasons for this lack of involvement were provided by stakeholders. These explanations fell into two main areas: the majority of the work was done at a local authority level; or because it was felt that engaging with potential users was not necessary in the developmental stage of the process:

“... it was too laden with people that are paid to do a job, rather than people from the real community actually having an input ... Project Board and the Reference Group, what you didn’t see there were what I would call real people. You’ve got more of the people that are paid to do a job.” (14)

“... they have got good neighbourhood organisations. A couple of schools right on site ... clearly we’re doing a lot of thing with their communities. You know, so there didn’t need to be a huge amount of consultation around ...” (02)

Many stakeholders also acknowledged a lack of involvement with particular age groups, especially older adults and young people, and voiced their concerns over the ramifications of this lack of involvement. For example, a lack of involvement with older adults throughout the development of the Centre was recorded in the minutes of Project Board meetings:

“Engagement of older people’s groups and some stakeholders has been identified as an issue.” (Project Board Meeting Minutes - January, 2009)

Similarly, a lack of youth involvement was noted by a member of the Youth Provision Team on the Project Board who voices his concern about the frequency of younger people’s participation:

“We’ve not directly involved younger people more than a couple of times when we got some young people from the school.” (16)

Likewise, many stakeholders voiced their concerns over this problem. Here is one stakeholder concerned that the Centre could become a place mainly for children:

“... to see greater engagement from ... groups representing older people ... I want to see that occurring, because otherwise we’ll end up with a slightly bigger children’s centre.” (12)

Subsequently, perceived challenges with engaging certain age groups were identified and possible reasons for these challenges provided. It was suggested by one stakeholder from the Extended Services Team on the Project Board that one of the challenges to involving older people was because the project was led by children’s services, with an entire department dedicated to supporting children and their families, and a lack of services to connect to older people:

“...it’s been driven much more by children’s services ... there’s been a, um, a difficulty in engaging, um, services that support older generations ... at the partnership meetings it’s clearly been a councillors plus, um, children services-led project.” (04)

It was also clear that the council had well developed partnerships with children's services and that, as we have seen, the project was funded through children's services:

“... the partnership is just much more developed around children than they are around groups of older people ... therefore, the, the ability for us to bring people to the table is easier, because we've got lots of partnerships already.” (10)

“...it's kind of gone quicker with children and young people because there's actually a kind of funding stream in the children's centre going in, whereas I think for the kind of adult or older people's groups it's been a bit harder because there's no revenue funding but this.” (12)

When stakeholders were able to provide instances of user involvement, examples were largely described as professionals from Merton council participating in the Project and Programme Boards on their behalf. This is seen in one of the Project's Senior Manager's admission that representatives for Centre users were primarily on the Project and Programme boards:

“... there have been, um, representatives of older people's groups and younger people's groups in our project structure, in our reference group and ... in our project boards ...” (01)

Other examples of 'representation' by professionals were also noted from stakeholders from the voluntary sector:

“... we had a representative from the Family Centre just down the road, and they were responsible for linking with the local community, and fed that back to the board.” (02)

A number of one-off events were also listed as another effective way that potential users had been involved in the process:

“... obviously the naming competition, and the time capsule competition were ... broadened out to the local community ...” (05)

A number of stakeholders felt that users were involved in the process through information presented to the local community:

“We ran a local consultation event at... one of the schools ... plans were presented ... that event was attended, um, by both older people and younger people ...” (08)

Another issue debated during stakeholder interviews was *when* potential users should be involved in the process. Some stakeholders suggesting users should be involved from the outset, while others suggested there is no need to involve them during the initial stage of the Centre's development and design. As one

stakeholder suggests, user involvement from the outset was crucial to the entire process, but Merton had failed to do this:

“... it will make it harder now that what we’re saying is, here’s your building; now do you want some more involvement ... I don’t think you get the same level of buy-in that way ...if you’d have set it up much earlier than people would’ve felt that it was more their building.”

Conversely, others suggested that there was no need to involve potential users until the building was complete:

“... I think once people see the centre, they will want to get involved more.” (23)

More specifically, some stakeholders on the Project Board assumed users would not be interested in, or want to get involved with, the process of developing and designing the Centre, as they would find it difficult to understand:

“... where we tried to get the residents involved in the first place... they did initially start coming along... most of the initial meetings were too kind of technical ... they tended to back off until, as I say, now we've got, got it on the ground and they can see the sort of things that are carried on there.” (14)

If it seemed that user involvement wasn't crucial to the development of the Centre what evidence, if any, was there that the development had drawn on existing best practice or research? This question is addressed below.

7.7 Utilisation of best practice and research

Utilisation of best practice and research during the development of the Centre was often explained simply in terms of the professional experiences of stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre that could be drawn upon. Stakeholders suggested three options for relying on their own 'professional experiences': stakeholders' individual experiences; the local council's previous experience; and collaboration with professionals in the field of intergenerational practice who were seen to be 'experts':

“We used the knowledge we already had from our experience elsewhere ... ideas we had for what we thought might work.” (02)

“... they've gone down, I'd assume, a tried and trusted formula what they've used on other projects what the borough have done.” (01)

“the Beth Johnson Trust clearly ... the project manager has established a range of contacts ... with other people in the field ... local contacts with boroughs that have been doing intergenerational work ...” (03)

That said, many stakeholders from both the Project and Programme Boards admitted that use of examples of best practice and research was either limited or non-existent, and were often unaware of whether examples were used, if at all:

“I don’t know. I guess whatever would have been out there they would have utilised and made some reference to ...” (12)

Others felt that this was simply not necessary or that there were too few examples to draw on:

“... we talked to the large project board about this lack of any kind of real evidence... there is evidence, but it’s all kind of anecdotal ... we need something that’s a bit more identifiable in terms of indicators ...” (21)

“... I don’t think there is, there are many concrete examples of it in the UK ... had there been other models, we would’ve definitely gone and visited them, but I don’t think we did ...maybe we should’ve been more ambitious in looking for international links ...” (22)

Given the absence of user consultation and the fact that neither examples of best practice or existing research were drawn on to any extent, what then did the vision for the Centre actually look like - or consist of?

7.8 Vision for the Centre

In interviews, it was evident that there was no agreed, written down or documented vision for the Centre. Instead, many stakeholders spoke about their personal vision and what they hoped it might achieve. To the extent that there was anything that might be termed a 'shared vision', this seemed to consist of the idea that the Centre must be available to and used by everyone; that it should be recognised by the local community - and nationally - as a model; and that it would be both a hub for the local community and deliver wider intergenerational services and activities across the borough in the support of children and their families.

As a baseline measure of success, the Centre being opened on time and used was regarded as critical. Whether or not the Centre has been used, and how, will be explored in a later chapter but, in terms of the development phase, stakeholders talked about how it must simply be used:

“... it's got to be used, it's got to be seen ... as a venue that people want to use and come back to.” (12)

A number of stakeholders also envisaged the Centre being used by people of all ages:

“... some tangible proof that all generations are using it ... I wouldn't want it just to fall into being a children's' centre from nine till three and then ... a centre where somebody else can meet later on.” (01)

Having a Centre that is known in the local community, and recognised nationally for its work, was also regarded as central to the overall vision for the project. The need for such acknowledgement is recorded in *Merton's Intergenerational Project – Prospectus* (January 2009) where it states that:

“The project will offer participants an opportunity to be a part of a high profile development which could help achieve regional and national recognition”.

Many stakeholders spoke about seeing the Centre as a 'hub and spoke' model where intergenerational work could be delivered within the building itself, but would also provide wider reaching activity across the borough:

“... it is expected that the centre will be a hub for the coordination of intergenerational activity across Merton”. (05)

“... beginning to spread that thinking and that practice ... hopefully there being other community buildings ... like the schools, like other community centres, like libraries ... some of the learning and the stuff that's been successful is just replicated ... mushrooms out from there.” (09)

Despite the lack of user involvement noted earlier, the desire for community ownership of the project was critical to the developing vision of the Centre and how it might be managed:

“... it would be about community ownership really, so whether that’s through, you know, what I call proper participation and engagement on some kind of management committee, but that’s what I would want to see it achieve” (06)

Similarly, who should be managing the Centre in years to come was a much debated topic with many believing that the running of the facility should be taken from Merton council and left to the local community. This desire can be evidenced in minutes from Project Board meetings:

“The meeting went back to discuss the underlying vision for the IGC which includes development of an innovative, integrated programme with clear intergenerational outcomes, placing volunteering and volunteering opportunities at the heart of delivery and positive engagement of the community so that they feel a sense of pride and ownership of their centre.” (July 2009)

There was also considerable discussion amongst stakeholders in the Project and Programme Boards about how the Centre could provide and/or enhance opportunities for Merton council’s Children’s Centre core offer and wider agenda:

“... a lot of our work has to be inevitably around the early children and youth agenda because that is the core function, so it’s saying how can we deliver the Sure Start Children’s Centre programme in an intergenerational way.” (22)

A focus on delivering better outcomes for children and their families through childcare and employment services located within the Centre was seen as critical to the overall vision of the Centre. This was emphasised by a member of the Early Years/Children’s Centre team whom commented:

“I’d hope that we ... do some thinking around, um, how other services might move into ... parents of young children go there because it’s a place to mix. Their child can go in the crèche and they then get health advice there. (19)

At the same time, there was some confusion about how significant the Children’s Centre was within the Centre. Certain stakeholders from the Extended Years team believed that the purpose of the Centre was one of co-location - delivering a Children’s Centre that was based within a larger Intergenerational Centre:

“... where we started this journey was very much around co-locating a Children’s Centre within the intergenerational building ... and then to look very much around how you could adapt the Sure Start model to be intergenerational.” (20)

Other stakeholders from the department of Education at Merton Council thought that the Centre was primarily a Children's Centre with an intergenerational element added in:

“... first and foremost a children's centre, with an inter-generational bit added”

(12)

This begs the question about what, exactly, stakeholders did or did not understand by 'intergenerational' elements and intergenerational work and it is to this I now turn.

7.8.1 Intergenerational approaches to working across the generations

Many of the documents and the stakeholders themselves used the definition of intergenerational practice from the Centre for Intergenerational Practice – provided in chapter 2. Accordingly, stakeholders' understanding of the concept of intergenerational practice was often explained in terms of this definition. For example, many referred to the basic tenets of intergenerational practice used in CIP's definition, such as bringing the generations together, mutual exchange, and respect. As a starting point for the Centre's vision, the CIP definition can be found in *Merton's Draft Scope for IG strategy* (July 2009). Similarly, when asked how they would define intergenerational practice, one stakeholder with a senior role in the development of the Centre stated:

“It’s got a rather cumbersome definition on the Beth Johnson website, which I put on our website because I couldn’t think of anything better.” (03)

Still, as the project progressed, stakeholders’ understanding of intergenerational practice and approaches to working across the generations altered, and they began to put forward a number of other proposals and ideas. Many saw the ‘practice’ element of the term as doing something that brings the generations together for mutual benefit and/or outcome:

“... there’s got to be something whereby there is mutual benefit. It may not be the same benefit, it may be different.” (14)

“... a mutual outcome, a mutual set of goals and objectives in terms of what they want to do, which could be just having a nice time, or it could be cooking” (15)

Mutual respect, understanding and an exchange or transfer between the generations was another common element of their understanding of intergenerational practice. Various types of exchange or transfer were suggested by stakeholders, from the transfer of skills or knowledge, to providing a service of support to other generations. The importance of these factors can be seen in stakeholders’ responses to the question of what makes a good or an effective intergenerational relationship:

“Respect. Understanding ... it does help an effective intergenerational relationship ...” (02)

“... all generations have got needs ... equally, all generations have got something to offer ...” (17/18)

“... all generations can learn from each other, and, not only new skills, but they can explore and learn things together as well.” (21)

Which age groups are represented within intergenerational practice was another area of deliberation. In examples given, many stakeholders referred to specific age criteria that should be adhered to, while others believed that people of all ages should be included:

“It’s about ... seeing somebody 60 plus talking to somebody probably that’s 19 minus.” (17/18)

“...any project that we might do with the children, the older generation of, you know, middle/older generation could be involved in ...” (05)

Another area essential to stakeholders’ understanding of intergenerational practice was the relationship between participants. Consideration about whether

participants' relationships were either familial or non-familial was evident. As one stakeholder from the Capital Programme team states, intergenerational practice should involve a wide interpretation of 'family':

"A family, in my opinion really ... It's not mum, dad, brother, sister, you know, it's much wider than that." (06)

More specifically, many stakeholders referred to the relationship(s) between grandparents and their grandchildren, and parents and their children, when explaining intergenerational practice:

"... children and grannies, it is important to keep them in touch and ... they grow up very very quickly." (15)

"My children and I come so it is an Intergenerational Centre." (15)

Despite the ideas and suggestions provided about how to define and work 'intergenerationally', there was also uncertainty about the definition and how to apply the concept. When asked what intergenerational practice is, one Project Manager said:

"I have no idea; I don't think it's within my remit. Perhaps I should know ..." (12)

Similarly, I had observed uncertainty during a reference group meeting where participants were asked to conceptualise intergenerational practice:

“The group(s) seemed to struggle with what IP is, what it looks like, and what the purpose of it is for ... the reference group meetings discussions have highlighted just how difficult it is to define – the group questioned was is it about age, generation, family (parents and grandparents) etc.” (Nov 16, 2010 field notes)

If stakeholders struggled to understand what intergenerational practice was really about, then this might also be expected to have implications for their understanding of what a purpose-built intergenerational centre might look like and do. Below, I consider how this affected their views of what a centre might be.

7.8.2 Understanding(s) of what an intergenerational centre is (*is not*)

There was an acknowledgement amongst many stakeholders that not only was an ‘intergenerational centre’ a new concept to them, but they were not sure how to develop and design such a facility:

“... nobody was quite sure kind of what it looked like ... nor was it very clear how it, how it might happen, what things might happen in it” (03)

This uncertainty can also be seen in one of the architect's comments about a lack of guidelines from the funders about what an intergenerational centre should look like:

“...there wasn't parameters from the LDA, of what they thought an IGC should be. So it was really like, a blank canvas in a way” (17/18)

A consistent theme throughout stakeholder interviews was that an intergenerational centre was a place where generations could come together to share activities and services and provide a focus for outreach work:

“... a place where people of all ages feel welcome ..., people actually interact. So instead of being in a room together or even being in a building together and everyone being separate, it's actually about coming together and feeling togetherness ...” (16)

“... sharing the physical space is important, but having some activities that can be done ...young people sharing their skills with older citizens and older citizens sharing their skills or memories or their life experience ...” (07)

“... it's a kind of a focus ... sort of branching out and outreach work and sort of drawing people in ... letting people know what's going...” (23)

In their attempts to describe what an intergenerational centre is, many stakeholders related it to other types of centres that may involve the generations and/or were concerned that their intergenerational centre might not be different to any other centre:

“If it’s just another community centre, then we’re not being successful. It’s got to be something different ...” (22)

“...the administration in Merton does not want this building to be a local community centre ... so we’ll have to work to achieve that.” (09)

“... what makes it any different from what perhaps used to be called community centres, I’m still not entirely sure and I will be watching with great interest.” (12)

This apprehension is also apparent in one of the funder’s comments about a conversation he had with a council staff member during the intergenerational centre’s opening day:

“It’s not a community centre, and if I’m having a conversation with somebody else that manages a children’s centre, and for her to say to me, why can’t it just be called a community centre, then she needs to be educated why this is not a community centre.” (13)

Likewise, other stakeholders involved in the Early Years/Children's Centre team did not see how the Centre would differ from a children's centre:

"... it's not dissimilar from some of our children's centres, which are just children's centres." (23)

The inclusion of a wider range of ages involved in the Centre was seen by stakeholders as one of the fundamental characteristics that separates it from other types of centres. This idea manifested itself in a number of ways, from the simple suggestion that other generations are more visible to one another, to the idea that an intergenerational centre would not exclude anyone based on age:

"... children might be able to see more adults than what they would normally ..."
(12)

"... we don't have specific age ranges will be the main difference between that ... whilst children's centres certainly encourage the family type model ... children's centres you need to have a child to participate. Here you don't need to have a child or family even." (09)

"... all walks of life will use it, as opposed to ... the community centre, you will have specific groups will use a community centre ... different ages using one centre for the same thing." (14)

In addition, the use of space, in terms of how and when it will be used, was highlighted as another critical feature in differentiating an intergenerational centre from other types of centres:

“A community centre’s just a set of rooms that people actually hire, then use for whatever they want to do ... it’s not a drop-in like a lot of community centres are, and that’s why, for instance, there’s no cafe there.” (19)

The design of spaces within an intergenerational centre was commented on by many involved in the development of this project. This will be discussed in much more detail in the following chapter which is dedicated to exploring the perceived and observed use of design on interaction between the generations. For now, suffice it to say that stakeholders believed that various aspects of design could distinguish an intergenerational centre from other types of centres. The importance of designing a space for a specific purpose can be seen in one third sector representative on the Project Board comments about community centres he is familiar with:

“... pretty random buildings that just happen to be used by the community rather than, you know, designed specifically with something in mind.” (07)

Whilst it is evident that the vision was not entirely clear, there were some common elements and how these elements were then incorporated into a (written down) strategy or plan of action for how this vision will be achieved is considered next.

7.9 Strategy for the Centre

This final section explores how key stakeholders' proposed plans and the council's approaches for how the project will be delivered and how intergenerational interaction will be accomplished. This section also highlights a debate about whether an appropriate strategy existed and explores two proposed options for delivering the Centre's 'plan of action' - modifying or rebranding existing services as 'intergenerational' and focusing solely on the activities the Centre will deliver.

Although a number of ideas existed for how an overall strategy could be delivered, and methods for achieving this, there was also an element of uncertainty about how the Centre would be delivered and what the expected outcomes were. During stakeholder interviews, and while observing Project Board meetings, it was evident that the strategy was not clear to many involved while others did not even know if one existed. Furthermore, developing a strategy was perceived as an evolving process, one that was not set out at the beginning but rather adapted over time:

“... you always think, you start with a strategy and then go from there, but because this project kind of, rather came to us rather a bit of a surprise... we’ve not exactly made it up as we go along, but we’ve had to develop the ideas...” (01)

The idea of utilising existing services provided by the council and then remodelling them as ‘intergenerational’ was seen to be one of the main methods of helping to deliver a strategy:

“... it’s basically about sort of shifting some work into what’s a very nice building ... some of it is about reframing some of the work we do ...you've got to reframe it to sort of do it in a generational way.” (10)

The strategy of re-branding current services and activities to become ‘intergenerational’ is also documented in Merton’s draft *Scope for IG strategy* (July 2009) where “*Branding services/activities as ‘intergenerational’*” is listed as their first suggestion. Such an approach can also be seen earlier in the development of the Centre when concern was expressed over just how many of the activities would be ‘intergenerational’ and where it was agreed that:

“The intention is that a range of activities should develop beforehand and be transferred to the centre when it opens.” (Project Board Meeting Minutes – October, 2008)

While I will explore at length about how activities were promoted and delivered in the Centre in a later findings chapter, here the aim is simply to show that activities were seen as key to delivering the strategy for the Centre. As such, the overwhelming response to the question of how the Centre will deliver a possible strategy was through the activities and services it will provide:

“Well, again, it’s activities isn’t it?” (06)

More specifically, many stakeholders saw the activities and services provided as the primary method for involving the generations and promoting interaction between them:

“... it is finding those sorts of, um, activities where, um, you can create those connections ...” (12)

7.10 Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has explored stakeholder expectations and proposed strategies for how the Centre will promote intergenerational work and examined the ways in which the development of the Centre involved both older and younger people in the local community. I have provided a background to the development of the Centre which has highlighted the fact that the majority of stakeholders’ involved in the development of the Centre were based within the local council with

expertise primarily in children's services. What is more, reflecting on the management processes of delivering the Centre; I have shown that the vision and strategy for the Centre were often unclear. How these issues may be linked to stakeholder's lack of understanding of intergenerational approaches to working and limited or no experience in the field of IP will be discussed in my final chapter.

Finally, this chapter has highlighted a number of concerns and challenges during the development and design of the Centre, mainly: primary source of (capital) funding originated from children's services, indecision around the governance and management structure of the Centre and a short time frame in which to deliver the building. Whether these aforementioned factors contributed to a lack of user involvement and poor utilisation of research and examples of best practice available in the field will also be addressed in my final chapter.

Chapter 8

Design of the Centre

8.1 Introduction

The previous findings chapter focused on considering how the Centre was developed: how funding and policy drivers drove the development and were expected to support the Centre and its activities/services; and how the relationship between the vision, strategy and goals for the Centre evolved. This next chapter switches attention to consider the design of the Centre and how, in particular, the environment can affect behaviours between the generations. As highlighted in the literature review, a critical issue within the intergenerational field is the lack of attention to how the built environment plays a crucial role in promoting or inhibiting intergenerational engagement. The need to distinguish, understand and observe how the environment, activities occurring within it, and characteristics of participants, come together to create positive changes for all involved, has also been identified as crucial. As a result, this chapter seeks mainly to address my third research question:

- How has the design of the Centre - both the social and built environments - promoted or inhibited interaction between the generations?

From an intergenerational perspective, the objective of designing a purpose-built intergenerational centre is not only to create an environment that is appropriate for various age groups, but one which also fosters engagement between the generations. As highlighted in my literature review, the majority of intergenerational professionals are not trained as design professionals, and yet they are increasingly asked to work with design professionals to build or adapt IGSSs. Conversely, it is not common practice for design professionals, such as architects, to design environments that accommodate various generations and facilitate intergenerational exchange. Throughout the development of the project, stakeholders and architects involved in the design of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre had the unique opportunity to work together to design this facility. For that reason, this chapter explores both the stakeholders' and architects' views on the design of the Centre and how such a design might influence interaction and engagement with its end users. In this chapter I also explore how Centre users have begun to use the spaces within the building.



Photo 8.1: Before: Site of the Centre 3 months into construction



Photo 8.2: Front aspect of the Centre 2 months after opening

8.2 Design Considerations

I begin this section by discussing a number of external factors that have had an effect on the design of the Centre. These include safeguarding issues; funding availability; and time considerations, as well as the actual location of the Centre, both within the wider borough and its local surroundings, and how this might influence the use and accessibility of the Centre.

8.2.1 Safeguarding issues

A number of stakeholders were mindful of the potential problems that safeguarding requirements, as well as health and safety needs, might play in both the initial and final design. How to design a day-care space within the Centre, taking account of

the rules and regulations around provision of spaces for children, was often raised as a concern in terms of potential segregation between the generations. While most stakeholders believed the day-care space should be a separate space to the rest of the Centre - as a necessary step to protect children - many saw this decision as potentially limiting interaction between the generations.

The decision to provide a separate space for children's day-care was made very early on in the development of the Centre, and evidenced in Project Board meeting minutes describing the final design of the Centre:

“The children's centre will be kept separate when children are there to ensure safety and protection for the children” (Project Board Meeting Minutes – Oct, 2008).

When asked if safeguarding issues would hinder or impede interaction between the generations, stakeholder responses were mixed. Some stakeholders stated emphatically that segregation was needed for safeguarding purposes and were convinced that the general public would appreciate this decision, while others thought that the separation of these two spaces did not need to limit interaction between the generations if it was managed correctly. From my own observation, the feeling that these spaces are separate entities is reflected in my field notes when I suggest that the day-care space and the remainder of the Centre are really two separate buildings:

“...it really does feel like the day care section is really a separate entity and a separate building ... It feels as if, when people come in and out, that they’re just using the lobby as a pathway and the rest of the building is quite separate from the day-care space.” (Jan 25-27, 2011 field notes)



Photo 8.3: Entry doors to the separate children’s spaces

The dilemma of delivering a day-care space within a wider intergenerational centre was also recognised by various members of the Project Board:

“I think one of the issues that’s been difficult as we’d gone along is the issue of the children’s centre having to be quite segregated from the rest of the building ... it just seems to kind of cut across the point of having an intergenerational centre ...”

(04)

“... I think there's a risk that it will kind of limit interaction more than we would like ...because of all the rules and regs about, you know, what children's centres have to be and everything as a safe place for children” (12)



Photo 8.4: Outdoor children's play space, separate from the rest of the Centre

Conversely, stakeholders from children's service on the Project Board believed that people would recognise the need to keep the children's space separate and, in doing so, others would use the space when children were not present:

“... the majority of people would understand ... that has to be, um, separate, um, as you say, for safe, , safe, guarding issues there are certain facilities within the children's centre that will be able to be used when the children's centre's not being used, anyway.” (21)

Likewise, management of the Centre and how the generations are brought together was seen as a way to control for safeguarding issues which would, in

turn, not impede interaction between the generations. As one of the Programme Sponsor Chairs suggests, having a separate space for children is necessary but there would also be opportunities to bring the generations together:

“... I think probably we've struck the balance there in the way that, you know, the children bit can be separate but the kids can come together with the rest of the building in a managed way, either with their parents or with their supervisors from the children centre ...” (02)

8.2.2 Funding and Time constraints

Two factors that were often raised as ‘constraints’ on both the amount of space in, and design of the Centre, were funding and time. Limited funding for the capital build, and restricted time available to complete the build, were discussed in detail by many stakeholders during interviews and in several of the Project and Programme Board meetings I observed. Despite these limitations, the design of the building was often referred to as ‘good value for money’ although many stakeholders also voiced concerns about the finished product:

“... we were concerned about how much money there was for what product we could get ... I think we were quite anxious at one point that the building would be, you know, pretty small but it does feel more usable than the plans might have suggested.” (03)

Other stakeholders spoke in detail about how decisions were made due to time constraints placed on the design and delivery of the building. For instance, one of the architects provides an explanation for using a modular build and the negative outcome(s) of working with modular units on the design of the Centre:

“... from the beginning, there was an early decision to go to modular construction, and that was down to ... funding ... it had to be spent by March 2009 ... the building had to open by June 2009 ... going modular, there’s a significant influence in the shape of the building and how it is ... and the problem with going modular, again, is that from an architectural point of view, a lack of control on the detailed design of it ...” (17/18)

8.2.3 Location and accessibility of the Centre

The geographical location of the Centre was also seen as a key aspect in the overall design considerations. Its physical location within the borough, its accessibility by various transportation links and footfall, as well as its immediate surroundings, were all raised during stakeholders’ interviews and summed up well in one stakeholder’s reflections about what criteria were used in deciding where the Centre should be located:

“I think it’s in an area of high deprivation, next to a primary school, next to an academy ... on the railway station, that must have helped ...” (09)

While some stakeholders thought the location of the Centre would attract potential users who lived nearby, others felt that the location was not the best choice for potential users as the more remote and isolated location would not attract much footfall and many people would not be willing to travel by bus, train or car to make use of the Centre:

“And one of the aspects of the centre is that geographically it’s in a corner of the borough, which means that it is not inaccessible ... accessibility is difficult from the other end.” (01)

What is more, other stakeholders felt that not only was the location of the Centre not ideal, but that this would cause problems for potential users accessing it in the future. The lack of accessibility of the Centre was raised by many stakeholders during interviews and while observing Project Board meetings. More specifically, the issue of footfall was raised repeatedly by stakeholders concerned that the location of the Centre would not attract people simply walking past to come in. Looking back, a senior Project Manager reflects on the decision not to locate the Centre on a busy high street:

“... It would have had a different character if it had been in a High Street setting with more footfall past it and, you know, people peering in and wondering. We’re not going to get a lot of that.” (12)

However, as another stakeholder from one of the local schools suggests, the location of the Centre may also be beneficial in attracting specific potential users:

“... I feel that a location which has got, you know, two, over two thousand children and young people on the site ... It’s got to be a good starting point for an intergenerational centre.” (08)



Photo 8.5: Accessibility of the Centre from the main road by foot

Accessing the building to drop off/pick up Centre users was regarded by many stakeholders as problematic, especially in the mornings. As one school representative on the Project Board observed, people using the crèche and the childcare facility potentially stop or block the traffic passing by:

“...it would’ve been nice if we could’ve fetched the road off a little bit to have a drop off at the front ... you’ve got no access at the front and I can only see a negative impact of it ...” (07)

Using public transport to access the Centre was another concern amongst many stakeholders. Despite the fact that there is a train station and bus stop located nearby, the length of time and inconvenience of using public transport was seen by many involved in the development of the Centre as potentially restricting its use:

“... there’s a lot of local residents that use the facility, but nowhere further afield ... unless there’s a specific purpose and people have cars. There’s only one bus route... there’s no parking and nowhere to stop in the front of the building ...” (22)

In my role as researcher, I also became increasingly frustrated as continuous delays to my journey across London left me wondering if other people travelling to the Centre would feel similarly:

“... I waited for almost an hour and a half for my train. There was no train... eventually I had to make my way to Norbury which is the closest train station and take a taxi ... what about other people that are trying to use the centre that don’t live next door to the centre and have to take a bus or train.” (Jan 19, 2011 field notes)

8.2.4 The immediate physical surroundings

The immediate surroundings of the Centre were suggested by many stakeholders as one feature of the 'design' that may attract or deter potential Centre users. The potential for people actively using the site where the Centre is located, the 'campus feel' that the whole site creates, as well as the location next to two local schools, were all factors that stakeholders suggested were key:

“So I think it'd probably be the size of the site, and I just hope that I can link to the two... it's almost like a campus.” (15)

“... once you've got activity happening in the building and you've got activity happening outside, plus you could have activity happening on the eventual playground, plus you have activity happening on the BMX park, it could be a very, very lively, busy place.” (16)



Photo 8.6: View of the outside gardens and adjoining schools

The location of the Centre between a primary and secondary school was suggested by many stakeholders as a significant factor in influencing interaction,

as it would draw in many of the children and young people who use these local schools:

“... it’s a very large site and I think it’s very fortunate it’s literally between two schools and that’s another huge plus.” (23)

This section has highlighted a number of factors that influenced the overall design of the Centre including its future use and accessibility. Equally important to the design outcome of the Centre are stakeholders’ views about how the design of the Centre can have an impact on the level and nature of interaction between generations. The following section presents some of these views.

8.3 Design and Interaction between the Generations

Using data from interviews of Merton Council staff, architects and Centre staff, an analysis of stakeholders’ comments about design features of the Centre such as the range, size and flexibility of spaces, and the functionality or practical use of the Centre’s design are considered below.

First and foremost, there was uncertainty among stakeholders about how the design of the building could in fact foster interaction among the generations. Many stakeholders felt that more time was needed for the Centre to be used by potential users before one could comment on the influence of the design of the Centre:

“ ... I think that there are some things in the design of the building that will be changed and evolved as we go along because they’ll have to.” (10)

“... a building is but a building, um, until it’s occupied and has a life of... um, a vibrant useable, um, space. So at the moment it is just a building.” (12)

Other stakeholders felt that the design of the Centre was a crucially important element in bringing the generations together, while others struggled to see how the design of the building could be ‘intergenerational’:

“Oh, I think very, very definitely there is an intention to influence interaction, particularly through that central space.” (09)

“... I can’t, at the moment, exactly see how you know, how the design is necessarily the intergenerational bit. But, you know, I’m not an architect.” (14)

Stakeholders also believed that it would be the activities and services provided that would dictate how the Centre is used:

“It was more about what’s going to happen, what sort of services are being delivered, and can people come and feel that it’s a place for them ...” (07)

Another stakeholder from the Capital Programme Manager even suggested that people will use the Centre regardless of how it was designed:

“ ... I wouldn't want to focus too much on a building because I think anything's, anything's manageable ... It just takes a bit of creativity or a bit of determination to get over those barriers because mostly we all work in buildings; they're not wholly fit for purpose ...” (02)

8.3.1 The new and modern design

The Centre was described by many stakeholders as new and modern, and generated both positive and negative responses to the question of how these features might influence interaction among the generations:

“... it's so pristine ... which could work both ways. It could be a really, really positive thing or it could be... It's really difficult to tell.” (05)



Photo 8.7: New modern space in the Centre stakeholders referred to

Several stakeholders believed that the new and modern feel of the Centre would deter potential users, especially older people who would find the interior of the building threatening and/or unfamiliar:

“...a building like that could be quite intimidating for some of the elderly residents. Just because it’s so kind of modern and it’s light and it’s quite modernistic-looking and it’s sort of a bit minimalist ... some people aren’t used to spaces like that.” (11)

Conversely, one stakeholder’s confident reply suggested that the new and modern feel would attract potential users as it was a nice place to come and visit:

“... it’s new, it’s modern, therefore it will look nice ... things that are held in old community centres which are dull, dismal, and frankly I find the environment affects me. So, you know, something that’s a nice place to go will be, you know, also an attraction, I hope.” (19)

8.3.2 Range, size and flexibility of spaces

Many stakeholders referred to the numerous possibilities that the Centre’s design of combining flexible spaces could facilitate. Especially noteworthy was the importance placed on combining the open space in the middle of the Centre - for groups to participate in activities and attend meetings - with smaller spaces for more intimate one-to-one work (see appendix 11 for the layout and space/room allocation in the Centre). As one stakeholder states:

“... we tried in the end to, to try and provide a diversity of spaces, both indoors and

outdoors. None of them were very big, but we tried to make at least one of them quite big ... then we tried to find spaces of, of varying kinds and with various possible permutations of use so there would be flexibility in the future for people to choose, um, how things worked.” (06)

More specifically, the need for both private and public spaces where potential users could choose to interact with one another or have time alone, was deliberated upon in great detail. For example, the importance for children to have shared spaces as well their own quiet space was identified by one stakeholder from the Integrated Services Team when discussing the versatility of the Centre’s design:

“... it’s important to have your own space and shared space ... because ...very young children need some quiet time away from the world and the world from them ...” (22)

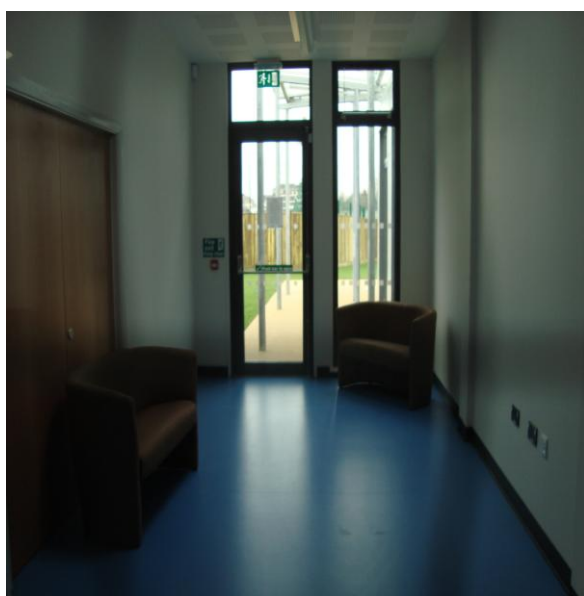


Photo 8.8: Space allocated for private meetings/ time spent alone

Providing spaces that are flexible in their function was a deliberate decision of both the stakeholders responsible for developing the Centre and the architects tasked with designing the space(s). The decision to provide multipurpose rooms was described by many stakeholders as a way to ensure spaces could be used in whichever way potential users dictated, and would allow for several 'use(s)' of the centre to develop over time:

“... it's a huge space that you can do a lot of things in. And you can either be walking through and see somebody you know, or you can sit down and not talk to anybody, or you can watch ... so you can bring your computer, work in there, talk to people ...” (20)

Likewise, one of the architects working on the project affirms the decision to provide flexible working spaces when she speaks about the difficulty in designing spaces for multiple reasons:

“... we did ask the client ... they were really keen not to define what was going to happen ... one of the most difficult things to do in design; to design for multipurpose, not, not having that collective activity.” (04)



Photo 8.9: A space designed to be used in a multipurpose manner

A number of reasons for designing the Centre with flexible and multipurpose spaces were suggested, including: Centre users would be able to use these spaces however they chose; stakeholders were not yet certain how intergenerational activity would happen; and the use of these spaces would need to evolve over time:

“By almost being a blank canvas ... we knew that there had to be quite large, open rooms that, you know, could develop over time ... so that it wasn’t defined by what had to be in there.” (14)

“... it needed to be as flexible as possible, because we weren’t quite sure how intergenerational activity’s actually going to happen, so we needed a range of spaces that people could interact in ...” (21)

“You know, the different generations need to discuss and share and shape it, and part of the design is to allow for that ...” (01)

Overall, stakeholders were of the view that providing flexible spaces that could be used for various purposes was the best option, and the idea of creating a functional and adaptable space that would develop and that users would ‘grow into’ was key in designing the Centre.

8.4 Functionality (and practical use) of the design

According to a number of staff working in the Centre, as well as stakeholders who visited the Centre, the ‘functionality’ of the Centre was not adequately considered during the design process. More specifically, it was suggested that the day-to-day use of the Centre by potential end users and staff alike was not reflected in the design. Examples of impractical decisions which have the potential to create an inaccessible and unwelcome environment included: a lack of designated and adequate storage spaces; limited consideration of how independent agencies would use the Centre outside regular office hours when staff were not present; and the impracticality of certain security measures put in place.

For example, the location of the storage space designated for buggies forces both staff and Centre users to come in and out of the building a number of times in order to store their buggy in the allocated spaces outside of the Centre. Consequently, if Centre users have a young child with a buggy, one stakeholder

who works in the Centre warns that the design of the Centre will discourage them from using the facility in the future:

“... several conversations about the fob entrance to the buggy store, which... at the end of the day that is a barrier to people coming in ... it’s discouraging ... it’s things like that that are about the functionality on a day to day basis of a building that designers often get wrong.” (20)

Another example of how the functionality of the Centre was not considered in the final design is seen in one stakeholder’s concern about a lack of security when outside organisations are using the building and Centre staff are not present:

“If the place isn’t staffed but you have an activity going on elsewhere, that makes it extremely impractical ...” (20)

Likewise, another stakeholder working in the Centre on a daily basis expressed concerns about the lack of appropriate security measures for staff working in the Centre:

“So that that front area isn’t completely accessible to the public; at least having a facility so I can buzz people in and out. That hasn’t been included in the design and that hatch is enormous in terms of staff safety. I don’t think that that was necessarily considered On the same situation, having that door locked and not having it on automatic is extremely unwelcoming to the public...” (10)

8.5 Furnishings

The ways in which furnishings within the Centre can promote engagement with, and foster interaction between, the generations is also emphasised in a number of stakeholder interviews, and in my observation notes. Here, I consider the influence of furnishings such as posters and pictures displayed in the Centre, colour schemes on the wall and the arrangement of furniture within the Centre, and how these impact on the mood within the Centre and can encourage the generations to use the space in specific ways. For example, one stakeholder believed that designating information displays for each generation would allow everyone to feel a part of the Centre:

“I think what we’d have to ... make sure that there’s enough space for, well, as much space as possible to share amongst the various groups, so you know, well, we have an Older Person’s notice board, a Children and Families notice board, and For Everybody notice board ...” (10)

Other stakeholders were concerned that having bare walls might negatively influence interaction if the generations were not involved in deciding how they were decorated:

“... at the moment, there’s nothing on the walls; the walls are extremely bare. So we need to think about how and obviously I want to involve people in how we... or what we put up there because that will definitely... It will become a talking point which obviously then does impact interaction.” (05)

The idea that certain furnishings could create a specific atmosphere within the Centre was emphasised as one method of influencing engagement and interaction. The perceived atmosphere created by furnishings varied from providing a warm and welcoming space where potential users would want to visit, to creating a clinical and soulless space users would avoid:

“... it was always supposed to have carpet. But they changed it to vinyl, but that kind of, give... does give it a bit of a clinical feel to it.” (17/18)

“There were some new furnishings today in the lobby ...which gives it a little more privacy, um, and intimacy ... It just ever so slightly takes away from the institutional feel” (Feb 7 & 12, 2011 field notes)



Photo 8.10: Recently added book cases and vinyl flooring

The influence of specific furnishings, and colour schemes in particular, was proposed as another method for influencing behaviour and forms of interaction between the generations:

“... I’ve read a bit about sort of colour schemes and what does and doesn’t promote intergenerational relationships ... And I don’t know how much of that was taken into consideration when choosing colours and everything.” (14)



Photo 8.11: Example of different colour schemes in the Centre

The importance of furniture in creating welcoming spaces which the generations will want to visit is exemplified in one of the architect’s reflections on how the limited budget restricted the choice of furniture used in the Centre:

“... loose furniture plays a big part in how that can happen ... I think what they’ve chosen is nice enough, but kind of, is going against what we envisioned that space to be ... you could create groups or you could pull those bits apart and have them as individual pieces so it brings a bit more of a dynamic space. Whereas the café type tables are not really right for that...” (14)



Photos 8.12: Example of soft and hard furnishings found within the Centre

8.6 Use of spaces

Creating shared open spaces and “traffic” flow that encourages informal interactions among the generations was one of the central themes of the design process noted during the development of the Centre. The idea that creating open spaces would allow for easy movement throughout the building was supported by many of those involved. More specifically, the design of the Centre was often mentioned in terms of how shared spaces within the building would allow people to move freely throughout the building, to come together or pass by one another

uninterrupted. Equally, the flow from inside to outside spaces, and how the main space in the centre of the building opened onto other rooms in the building, were regarded by stakeholders as an important feature of the design that could potentially foster interaction between the generations.

It was also suggested that communal spaces - mainly the lobby and outside gardens - were specifically designed to encourage people to move freely from the inside to outside (and vice versa):

“... we had extensive outside grounds so we knew that we had to design the building so the inside could come into the outside... the interactive space will look like it almost just flows into the external space, which is what the intention....”

(17/18)



Photo 8.13: View from the outside gardens into the main building

Moreover, creating a feeling of open and free flowing spaces that do not restrict movement would allow users to feel a part of the entire Centre and its surroundings:

“The idea that everything could work together so ... things open out onto each other ... the kitchen has got hatches into the main area ... the day care manager in his little office there can see what’s going on, because there’s a window through into the social space.” (03)



Photos 8.14: Kitchen opening onto an activity room and central space

The open central area is a noteworthy feature of the design of the Centre. It was believed it would encourage positive interactions between people and create opportunities for the generations to meet:

“... it is within the beginning and the heart of the whole building ... you have to go through that first part of the social space to get into the children’s centre ... already there’s ... accidental occurrences ... a mother drops her children off and then can

just, you know sit around for a while and discuss things with other, older people.”

(09)

Furthermore, having rooms that open out into that central space not only creates opportunities for unintentional meetings among the generations, but provides space to meet and work on a specific activity or event together:

“... once we got to the idea of everything coming off that central space ... because then the various bits feed into the central space, which says, um, we don’t do things in separate rooms, we do things communally in the middle.” (15)

Conversely, there was a concern amongst some stakeholders that open communal spaces may cause problems for some potential users. As one stakeholder – from the Youth Provision Team on the Project Board suggested, such large open spaces could create feelings of vulnerability:

“... having an open space to a certain extent could impede because people might feel exposed within that space; they might feel quite anxious about going into a very large space where you know you have to talk to people because some people could find that very, very difficult.” (16)

These beliefs and comments about how the design of the Centre may or may not affect interactions between the generations; and how the design was expected to facilitate or impede interactions; were tested out through a series of observations (see Chapters 4 and 5). These observations – conducted during the early months

after the Centre opened – explored how the generations actually used these new spaces.

8.7 Use of the Centre

Using data collected during structured observations in the Centre - mainly use of the central space where many stakeholders suggested potential interaction between the generations was most likely to occur - this section provides a detailed analysis of the patterns of movement within the Centre.

Stop Gap – while leaving or waiting	Passing Through	Attending a meeting/ activity in the lobby	Information gathering
624	375	283	13

Table 8.1 Use of the Centre's central space (lobby)

During observations, the central space in the Centre was found to be used in three main ways: as a means of passing through the space to reach another room; as a 'stop gap' for Centre users while they were waiting for an activity or service to begin or after one was finished; or for Centre users to attend an event (see Table 8.1).

8.7.1 'Stop Gap'

Sitting down	Standing	Talking with others	Wandering around	Looking at information	Visiting staff office	Getting a drink
464	95	51	44	38	27	9

Table 8.2 - Use of the Centre's central space (lobby) as a 'stop gap'

The most observed use of the central space within the Centre was what I have labelled a 'stop gap': using the lobby as an intermediary space for a specific reason before moving on to another room or when leaving the building. While using the central space as a 'stop gap', Centre users were observed either waiting for an activity, service or meeting to start, or leaving after one of these events took place. In addition, a variety of secondary behaviours were observed while Centre users were either waiting for, or leaving after, an activity or service (see Table 8.2). In descending frequency of how often they occurred, these behaviours included:

- Sitting down at one of the tables and chairs or sofas - mainly to (un)dress for outside, read a leaflet, talk on the phone, fill out a form or to breastfeed;
- Standing in the central space in a stationary position near one of the windows or information displays;
- Talking with others whom they met while in the central space - quite often staff who had stopped to talk with them;

- Wandering around the central space with no identifiable purpose;
- Looking at information provided in the central space (i.e. Leaflet rack, notice board, schedule of activities);
- Standing by the staff office waiting for, or speaking with, a member of staff;
- Having a cup of coffee or water provided by the Centre.

When Centre users used the central space as a 'stop gap', they tended to congregate right in the front or back of the space - either by standing in a group or sitting down together at a set of arranged furniture. For a specific diagram illustrating Centre users' tendency to gather together in either the front or back of the Centre's central space, see appendix 12.

8.7.2 'Just passing through'

Aside from people using the central space as a 'stop gap', the other consistent use of this space was for Centre users to simply pass through. Centre users passed through the space without stopping as a means of going somewhere specific in the Centre with purpose. This can be seen in my field notes:

“It feels as if, when people come in and out, that they're just using the lobby as a

pathway and the rest of the building is quite separate ...” (Nov 16, 2010 field notes)

More specifically, definite patterns of movement were recorded, including Centre users travelling directly from the front door to the day care space; Centre staff crossing the central space to enter another part of the building; and Centre users using both ends of the central space as entrance and exit points (see appendix 13). Here, for example, I reflect in my field notes on movement from the entrance of the Centre directly into the daycare space:

“... people are coming in and out going specifically and directly into the daycare facility without really spending much time in the rest of the building ... as soon as people walk in the door they turn to the right and walk straight in to the daycare space without necessarily spending time in the lobby.” (Nov 10, 2010 field notes)

Another notable pattern was staff using the central space to go back and forth to other rooms in the Centre:

“... staff seemed to be busily moving about the building from one room to another, mainly to/from the daycare space” (Jan 25-27, 2011 field notes)

Centre users also used the central space when entering and exiting the building. For example, many Centre users came in through the front door of the Centre and travelled through the central space to access the gardens or adventure playground

located outside at the back of the site. Similarly, a number of staff used the back of the central space to leave the building:

“... seems like there are two entrance and exit points, used almost equally, especially by staff” (Nov 26, 2010 field notes)

Another noteworthy use of the central space was users participating in an activity, receiving a service, or attending a meeting. The central space was often used as a place to showcase one-off events such as a theatre production or to host regularly scheduled activities such as the weekly gardening club or drop-in services such as the stop smoking campaign.

To summarise, while creating a shared open space with a range, size and flexibility of additional connected spaces provided opportunities for interaction between the generations, many factors also contributed to limited interaction. This chapter has demonstrated that the central space in the Centre was primarily used as either a means of passing through to reach another room or as a ‘stop gap’ for Centre users waiting for an activity or service to begin or after one was finished. Such uses of the space could have fostered interaction between the generations the Centre’s design sought to achieve. However, issues concerning the location and accessibility of the Centre along with safeguarding all proved problematic in the functional and practical use of the Centre and could have added to the limited engagement of the generations while visiting the Centre.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore how the design of the Centre has influenced how the generations use the spaces and, subsequently, how the generations may interact with one another within these spaces. I have explored stakeholders' perceptions of the design of space(s) and how such a design may influence interaction between the generations, in particular – how furnishings can influence levels of engagement between the generations and how the generations use and move through the spaces within the Centre. Included in this chapter was a consideration of the importance of the location of the Centre, both within the wider borough and its local surroundings, and how this may influence the use and accessibility of the Centre. Finally, this chapter also included a detailed analysis of patterns of movement within the central space in the Centre: a space which has the potential to encourage or discourage traffic flow through the Centre and potentially influence interaction between the generations. Following on from this analysis, the next chapter explores how the generations actually interacted with one another in the Centre and how staff facilitated these interactions.

Chapter 9

Delivery of the Centre

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter addressed both the perceived and observed benefits and limitations of the Centre's design in influencing the level and types of interaction between the generations. This chapter follows on with a focus on what happened once the Centre actually opened and participants were able to make practical use of it. This is done by examining how the generations use and interact in communal spaces within the Centre; primarily whether interactions differed with age or relationship between users. The chapter is broken down into three sections: how the generations used the Centre; how the Centre and what it offers was promoted and communicated to (potential) users; and how the Centre was managed and activities facilitated. In so doing, the chapter seeks to explore two of my research questions:

- How has the provision of services and activities in the Centre met the needs of users?
- How have the processes involved in the development of the Centre influenced how it is used (and by whom)?

9.2 Use of the Centre

Findings presented in this section set out to examine how different people use the Centre and interact in its communal spaces, and whether interactions differ with age or relationship between users. It also considers whether the presence of particular people or groups in the Centre influences the nature and levels of interaction between the generations. For reasons discussed in my methods chapter (see Chapter 5), it was not feasible to observe all users and activities within the Centre. Instead, I provide an account of the most prominent uses and users of the Centre which, together with excerpts from my observation notes, demonstrate how the Centre was used by the different generations. In my discussion chapter, I will consider the possible consequences of, and explanations for, the patterns of how the Centre was used and by whom.

9.2.1 Users of the Centre

How people use a space, and engage with one another in that space, can be influenced by many factors, one of which is age. As noted in my introductory chapter, one of the primary aims of the Centre was to provide a range of services under one roof for all ages. Overall, data from the structured observations shows that more adults used the space than children and young people (see Table 9.1).

Adults		Children and Young People		
Adults 19 - 59	Older Adults 60+	Children 0-5	Older Children 6-12	Young People 13-18
601	162	260	104	75

Table 9.1 – Centre users' attendance by age¹

As Table 9.1 indicates, there were considerably more adults (aged approximately 19-59) than older adults (aged 60+) and more infants and younger children (0-5) than older children and young people using the Centre. Consequently, older adults, older children (aged approximately 6-12) and young people (aged approximately 13-18), were the least visible age groups during observation periods. In addition, not only was the physical presence of infants and young children apparent, the sights and sounds of them were also present as highlighted in my field notes:

“... sound of babies crying has filled the IGC lobby ...” (Mar 12, 2011 field notes).

Similarly, various objects were observed in the Centre that would indicate a strong presence of infants and young children. Pictures 9.1 and 9.2 provide examples of items such as children's toys and highchairs in the Centre.

¹ The approximate age of Centre users observed is based solely on the researcher's observation of age



Photo 9.1: Highchairs in activity room Photo 9.2: Child's stuffed toy left in lobby

Young people were rarely observed using the Centre unless it was for a specific school activity such as a play, during or directly after school hours. Correspondingly, concern was noted during stakeholder interviews that young people would not be interested or engaged with the Centre:

“... it's quite clear that teenagers wouldn't necessarily, ah, participate in the activities of the intergenerational centre ... they have their own culture ... I don't think they would have anything to do with the intergenerational centre - there's nothing there for them.” (07)

An equally striking finding, also evident in Table 9.1, was that older adults were also largely absent from the Centre is consistently reflected in my field notes:

“Where are the older people? Where are they? You just don't see them unless it's a very specific activity around the... usually physical exercise ...” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes).

This is not to say that that there were no older adults at all, but data from the structured observations clearly demonstrate that in comparison to other age groups, older adults were underrepresented. When older adults were present, they tended to be absent from areas used mainly by younger children and were more like to participate in specific adult activities such as dance or keep fit classes. In addition, the majority of Centre users were female. Rarely were male Centre users observed coming in to the Centre individually; the overwhelming majority of male Centre users were accompanying their partner and/or child or, as Picture 9.3 demonstrates, waiting for a female partner who was participating in an activity.



Photo 9.3: Group of older men waiting for their wives attending an activity

An analysis of the relationship(s) between Centre users was generated from observation notes taken while in the Centre and data collected from the observation schedule. As Table 9.2 shows, the most prominent relationship between Centre users was 'familial' - consisting of parent(s)/child, grandparent/grandchild, and adult couple dyads.

Familial			Non-Familial		
414			243		
Parent(s)/Child	Couples	Grandparent/ Grandchild	Acquaintance/Friend	Outside Group	Alone
375	18	14	36	19	188

Table 9.2 – Centre users’ relationship to others visiting the Centre

The noticeable presence of families, especially parents and infants/young children, is further evidenced in my field notes when I comment on the numbers of families attending the Centre:

“... there was a number of children throughout the day ... babies, toddlers and parents that came in. I probably saw about 30 different sets of families come in”
(Feb 7, 2011 field notes).

Of the Centre users who were categorised as non-familial, the overwhelming majority were visiting the Centre alone. This was followed by a smaller group of users who came to the Centre with friends or acquaintances or as a part of a larger group of people who were using the Centre privately. Furthermore, observation confirms the striking presence of staff whose movements were consistently noted. During observation, Centre staff were consistently seen walking around the building, actively setting up and/or cleaning up from previous activities which created a sense that they too were one of the main ‘users’ of the

Centre. At times, it felt as though Centre staff took over the space entirely and seemed to be the only people present:

“... it was mainly staff in the building ... for over two hours it was just myself and staff members ... It gives off a feeling of it just being a work environment as opposed to a community centre of any sort.” (Nov 26, 2010 field notes)

9.2.2 Uses of the Centre

Given that the main aim of the intergenerational centre is to “....*provide a range of shared services and facilities under one roof for older people, children and young people across the borough.*” (London Borough of Merton, 2010) observations of why people were coming to the Centre, and how they were using communal spaces within the Centre, were investigated. Generally, observation data show that the majority of people use the Centre to participate in an activity, access a service, and use the adventure playground (see Tables 9.3 and 9.4).

Activities	Services	Adventure Playground	Outside group using the space	Unknown	First visit to the Centre
770	280	40	31	23	8

Table 9.3 – Centre users’ reason for using the Centre

As Table 9.3 indicates, the overwhelming majority of users were observed either participating in an activity or receiving a service at the Centre. More specifically,

Centre users were almost three times more likely to attend an activity than access a service.

A number of secondary uses were also observed: the Centre was often used as a 'day-care' or 'play space' for a number of younger children who were visiting the Centre with their parents; as a space for meetings or gatherings - particularly from local groups in the community; and as a space for staff. During observation, it became apparent that the central spaces within the Centre were repeatedly used by infants and young children to play, often unsupervised by parents. The following description from my field notes, of how one parent and his children used the Centre, illustrates this:

“... there was a father and his three children already in the centre, sitting in the lobby and they were there having their dinner, ah, tea, snacks and playing in the lobby. ... the dad allowed them to use the lobby, really, I suppose as their own personal play-space ...” (Feb 24, 2011 field notes).

Services	Age-Segregated	Potentially Intergenerational
Scheduled	216	0
Drop-In	31	33

Activities	Age-Segregated	Potentially Intergenerational
Scheduled	0	128
Drop-In	136	506

Table 9.4 – Types of activities and services Centre users' attended

In terms of specific activities and services, as Table 9.4 shows, overall Centre users were far more likely to attend activities and services that were 'drop-in', rather than scheduled. What is more, the sense that the Centre was led by a programme of drop-in sessions, instead of scheduled events, is seen in my reflection about the uncertainty of who will use the Centre and when:

“...the number of scheduled activities is quite minimal and it feels as if it is a drop-in centre ... They haven't signed up for activities, so you're never sure who's going to come in on the day for an activity...” (Feb 25, 2011 field notes)

Nevertheless, when the two main uses of the Centre – to attend a drop-in or scheduled activity or service - are divided into separate categories, there is an obvious differentiation. Table 9.4 shows that people visiting the Centre in order to receive a service were more likely to be accessing a scheduled service, rather than a drop-in one. Conversely, Centre users participating in an activity were more likely to be attending a drop-in activity, rather than a scheduled one.

A further key distinction can be made between activities and services that were delivered in 'age-segregated' or 'age-integrated' (and potentially 'intergenerational') ways. Encouragingly, the majority of activities and services at the Centre had the potential to be inclusive of all ages and promote intergenerational interaction. Nevertheless, Table 9.4 demonstrates that there were a number of activities and services that either excluded or deterred certain age groups from participating.

9.2.3 Levels and types of interaction

Noting primary behaviour only, my initial observations of the level and types of interaction were grouped into categories of 'solitary': engaging in an activity without acknowledgement of others; or 'interactive' behaviours: interaction with, or acknowledgement of, another individual. Individual behaviour was classified as either 'no interaction with another person' or as a solitary act such as watching others. Interactive behaviours were broken down into categories that described who Centre users were choosing to interact with: people from their own age group, other age groups, and staff. When the interaction observed was with a Centre user from a different age group, it was also noted whether the interaction had a positive or negative affect: an expressed or observed emotional response on the generations (see Table 9.5).

Solitary Behaviour		Interaction				
Solitary/No interaction	Watching others	Own age group	Staff	Family	Other age group	Researcher
94	11	403 ²	204 ³	110	34	24

Table 9.5 Nature of interaction between Centre users

Results show that the majority of behaviours observed in the Centre were interactive. However, most interactions occurred between people from the same age group. As Table 9.5 highlights, interactions with other age groups were mainly with staff in the Centre, me in the role of researcher, or a limited number of specific

² 305 of these interactions occurred when Centre users entered together, 98 interactions when Centre users were not already together in the Centre

³ The majority of interactions between Centre users and staff were initiated by staff

'intergenerational' interactions. Intergenerational interactions ranged from unstructured encounters between people from other age groups to more planned and regular meetings. For example, my field notes describe a spontaneous interaction between two older women and a child who were in the same communal space:

“The only time I saw that was when one of the children was playing and two older women were sitting at their table, and he fell over very close to them ... they sort of reached out their arm to try to console him because he started crying....That is the only intergenerational interaction that I witnessed throughout that whole time.”

(Feb 12, 2011 field notes)

By contrast, observations before the start of a regularly planned activity might include the kind of 'intergenerational' interaction described here:

“...there was a very spontaneous intergenerational interaction between a young girl ... as the older person walked into the lobby, the young girl very enthusiastically yelled out, *her name*, and gave her a big hug. Then they proceeded to chat together ...” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes).

When the behaviour observed was mostly solitary, the Centre often felt quiet and unsociable:

“... although today was quite busy with all the different activities going on in different rooms, they all seemed to be very solitary activities ... It feels like people come in and out for their activity and aren't talking to anybody else.” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes).

A number of Centre users were also observed actively avoiding interaction with one another as in this account of Centre users attending a child health clinic:

“... there was no interaction, even between the parents, even sitting at the same table when they were forced to, they weren’t interacting together, they weren’t speaking. They were actually turning around and not facing one another ...” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes).

During observation it became evident that most interactions observed were occurring just before or immediately after a specific activity or service took place in the Centre. Likewise, periods between these activities or services were quiet - resulting in the Centre often feeling unoccupied as evidenced in my field notes:

“... you can tell from how quiet it is how the centre really does feel quite unoccupied in between the scheduled activities. I’m lucky if I see two or three people in between the activities, and those people are normally staff members only.” (Nov 16, 2010 field notes).

In summary, the majority of interactions observed were between individuals of a similar age, either from similar age groups who came into the Centre together or interacted once they met in the Centre, immediately before or after an activity or service within the Centre.

9.3 Centre Management and Facilitation

I turn now to how other features of the Centre, such as staff management and facilitation, fostered and inhibited interaction between the generations. Included in this discussion is an exploration of how staff managed the Centre as well as prepared for, and organised, activities and services.

9.3.1 Management and organisation

The literature review revealed that staff working in IGSSs are a key element for success and have an important role in the planning and implementation of IG programming. In addition, as noted in the previous chapter, furniture and furnishings have the potential to influence interaction between users. Therefore, how Centre staff chose to arrange furniture in the Centre could have an effect on where, and how, Centre users interacted with one another.

Observation shows that there was often no attempt by Centre staff to organise Centre furniture in any meaningful way. As my field notes describe, on one occasion the tables and chairs were not placed back in any arrangement after an activity the night before:

“When I came in this morning the setup was not done ... there was a Latin dancing group the night before in the lobby and that wasn’t rearranged. So all day the room was not laid out so people would be able to sit down.” (Dec 8, 2010 field notes)

Furthermore, an observation of how staff had chosen to arrange the tables during a busy time in scheduling, when many people were in the Centre attending various activities, illustrates how furniture can create a physical barrier to people interacting with one another:

“... there seemed to be a large gap between the first two top tables and the back two top tables ... that actually caused a physical distance between people. You weren’t even able to sit near one another.” (Jan 25-27, 2011 field notes)

Similarly, in the following example, my field notes describe a comparable table configuration and comments on how the current table configuration resulted in people not sitting down next to one another and interacting:

“... the table layout has been the same now for almost two weeks ... only three tables today ... big spaces in between the tables so it doesn’t allow for any interaction.” (Feb 16, 2011 field notes)

9.3.2. Facilitation

Facilitation refers to both the preparation and organisation of activities and services taking place at the Centre. As the literature review has shown, appropriate planning and implementation is essential to meet the complex demands of activities and services that are appropriate for all ages. Equally, how

activities and services are planned and delivered can influence how the generations interact with one another in any given setting.

An example of the impact of planning and implementation can be found during observations made before a new activity was introduced to Centre (users). The introduction of video games as a form of play for all generations raised concerns about the levels of preparation needed before such an activity was due to take place. In this situation, the materials needed to facilitate the activity, scheduled for 3.30pm, were only being put together and organised shortly before the activity was scheduled to start:

“... staff member walked through the lobby to the room that it was going to be occupied in, at 3:20 ... to set up for the games ... it was evident that nobody had set up the game before – it was still in its packaging ...” (Jan 19, 2011 field notes)

Given the fact that this was a new activity where the materials needed had never been set up or tested before, allowing only ten minutes to prepare and organise the activity did not seem adequate and could have had potential consequences for both the facilitation and outcomes of the activity. Similarly, observations of an activity involving school children playing board games with adults, raised concerns about the level and adequacy of facilitation. In this situation, the staff member involved was observed making minimal effort to engage with participants and/or facilitate the interaction between participants:

“... the staff member responsible for running it spent a considerable amount of time at one specific table near the front of the lobby ...roughly 20 minutes with one volunteer ... chatting with him ... shortly after that another mother came over to that group and asked them a question, and that is the only time then that I saw the facilitator ... get up and help out other participants ...” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes)

Providing an explanation for, as well as structure and purpose to, activities and services within the Centre has also been established as an important aspect of management and facilitation. Observations in the Centre lobby of a group of children and their parents, who were waiting for an activity to begin, indicated that minimal effort was made by staff to provide an explanation of, or purpose for, the scheduled activity:

“... there’s no sign of the gardening club or the staff to help them set it up ... there’s a huge group of children ... that were waiting ... no staff had actually shown themselves yet to the group. At approximately 3:40, the kids came through the lobby and went straight into the garden ... it looked as if they approached the garden staff themselves to start the activity. There was no introduction and staff weren’t coming to gather the children ...” (Nov 16, 2010 field notes)

Another clear instance of an activity starting later than it was scheduled to, with no clear start time or instruction as to when the activity would start, can be seen in my observations of a dance exercise class. In this observation, not only did the staff

member start the scheduled activity 10-15 minutes late, but she did not inform participants that the activity was about to begin:

“...the activity is supposed to start at 6 pm. The staff member who was running the class went into the room without saying anything to anybody ... some of the people did see her go in and just automatically got up and followed her in ... it wasn't until 06:10 that she popped her head out of the door into the lobby and said, do you want to come in now.” (Jan 17, 2011 field notes)

Staff members were also repeatedly observed starting late. This lack of attention to time keeping can be seen in my field notes where I noted that activities started late on many occasions:

“The quick cook class started about five minutes late.” (Feb 15, 2011 field notes)

Conversely, there were instances of activities and services starting before the allotted time. For example, the weekly coffee morning is normally scheduled for 10am in the central space of the Centre. However, because a group of mums visit the Centre early for Coffee Morning straight after dropping off their children at school, the activity started considerably earlier:

“... the Coffee Morning is starting earlier ... the staff came out and brought out coffee and tea at 9:40 instead of waiting till 10:00 because the mums had been waiting ... I wonder if someone comes in at 10:00, if they feel that they're already not a part of the group ...” (Feb 15, 2011 field notes)

This lack of attention to timekeeping was evident with many of the scheduled activities and services; Centre users were frequently left unsupervised without any direction as to what they were meant to be doing:

“...the kids were relatively unattended ... there was four staff members... but only two of them were engaged with the children ... by 4:00, most of the kids had left on their own and come back inside to sit with their parents or they’d gone to the front of the garden, where a table was set up, and they were making cards.” (Jan 6, 2011 field notes)

9.4 Promoting the Centre

How staff describe activities occurring in the Centre, explain what the Centre is and who it is for, was also noted during observations. Staff were often overheard describing the Centre as primarily a ‘children’s centre’. When staff did describe it as an ‘intergenerational space’, they often tried to explain this by describing some of the activities that made it intergenerational. For example, during one observation, I witnessed a staff member talking to a mum about the activities on offer and describing the Centre as:

“... we’re not just a children’s centre, we are an intergenerational centre so we have other activities here like creative play and stuff” (Dec 13, 2010 field notes)

In this instance, the staff member does not explain why the Centre is intergenerational; in fact, the activity she describes was for children between the ages of nought to five and their parents. Another example of how staff (mis)understood who Centre activities are for comes from observations of staff from the 'Stop Smoking' Campaign who were talking with another staff member at the Centre. In this situation, I noted staff members asking another staff member if one needed to have a child under the age of five to participate in the Children's Centre services:

“... the staff member said, yes ... the staff member explained that it was because the room was built for children under five”. (Feb 12, 2011 field notes)

This is an example of staff thinking, and conveying to others, their belief that anybody who uses the Centre must have a child, primarily under the age of five. Another staff member was observed being asked about a specific activity, 'Fun for All'. The staff member responded by describing the activity as:

“... an after-school club ... mainly for kids, three to 12, and parents ...” (Jan 25-27, 2011 field notes)

9.4.1 Marketing and materials

Due to the fact that I was only able to observe what was happening *in* the Centre, and not what was being done elsewhere in the wider community, analysis of materials found within the Centre, as well as non-participant observation notes,

are used in the following section(s). Materials used in the analysis of how the Centre promoted its activities and services and to whom, include: leaflets, posters, printed and posted schedules, as well as signs and symbols found throughout the Centre.

First and foremost, there was acknowledgement among Centre staff and users that there was an urgent need to promote the Centre and its activities. During observation I witnessed both Centre staff and users discussing their concerns about the low numbers of participants:

“I heard them ask her why there was such a low number ... she replied that she thinks the low numbers are due to poor weather ...she did say they needed to do more outreach and promotion .” (Nov 10, 2010 field notes)

Signage can be an effective instrument of communication between Centre staff and (potential) Centre users: it can play a vital role in promoting the Centre more widely and provide information about what the Centre can offer. However, my observations consistently noted that there were no signs in – or outside - the Centre that communicate to potential users what the Centre is, what activities and services are offered, and where they are held. As my field notes and picture 9.4 demonstrate, the Centre's frontage does not explain that it is a space for all generations to meet or indicate what sorts of activities or services take place there:

“.. there is still no sign on the front of the building saying it’s an IGC so what does that say to others; there are no signs around the building saying to people what it is about, what happens here.” (Mar 12, 2011 field notes)



Photo 9.4: View of the front of the Centre – without a sign on the Centre

This lack of signage continues once you are inside the Centre:

“... there are no indications as to what is going on in each room. Rarely do you see a sign on the door that says what activity is there for that day.” (Mar 12, 2011 field notes)

Furthermore, it often leads to confusion among Centre users. Here, for example, is a description of Centre users entering the lobby:

“... a number of people come in today and they have no idea where to go. They actually looked very confused ... they had to go around to a number of the rooms, knock on the child health clinic door and ask where to go, went back up to the front and asked ...” (Mar 12, 2011 field notes)

Despite the fact that the lack of signage was not resolved during my time of observation, it is important to highlight the fact that I was only able to observe the Centre for approximately five months shortly after it was opened. Therefore, a number of these observations may have been due to teething problems and could have been resolved after my observation period was complete.

9.4.2 Exclusion and Inclusion

Overall, promotional materials tended to focus on what activities and services the Centre offered children and their families: activities and services were not commonly promoted as being potentially ‘intergenerational’. The exclusion of potential Centre users - older adults, young people and adults without children – is evident in many of the promotional materials that describe what activities and services the Centre offers and who can participate. Below, my field notes reflect on how a particular poster could potentially exclude certain users:

“... about supporting separated families, and the question at the top of it is ... if you have children under the age of 18, they will provide support to you and your

family ... even the pictures in the poster depict a very nuclear family made up of a younger mum and dad ..." (Dec 8, 2010 field notes)

The text in this poster suggests that potential Centre users who do not have a child under the age of 18, or are not parents, are not able to access the service through the Centre. However, many Centre users, such as older people, could have identified with this service as they may be grandparents with issues of 'family breakdown' or no contact with grandchildren. Another example of the potential exclusion of specific Centre users occurred when I was observing a group of older women who were interested in using the adventure playground and discussing the fact that they were excluded from using the space:

"... four older women had gone to the back of the garden and were looking around, and as they came back into the lobby ... and she said to me, when she was referring to the adventure playground, it really is a shame we have been banned from over there..." (Jan 19, 2011 field notes)

The potential for the Centre's promotional materials to exclude specific age groups is also apparent in the presentation of the Centre's monthly and weekly calendar of events - available to all potential users in the Centre and on-line. The description of certain activities and services listed, including logos on the timetable, suggest that the majority of activities and services offered are for children and their families (see appendix 7 and 14 for example of these schedules). For example, the logo found at the top of the page of the Centre's

monthly and special events schedule boldly states, “Extended Services – for children and families of the London borough of Merton”. The prominence and content of this logo potentially excludes many other age groups (without children).

Moreover, the descriptions of many activities and services suggest that they too are primarily for children and their families. For instance, the schedule suggests that the Centre provides a Family & Friends Play Session, categorised as a *“drop-in for children under 5 with their family and friends of all ages. Enjoy stories and songs at the end!”* Despite the fact that this description states it is for people of all ages, it also suggests that you must have a child under five to attend this session. Likewise, other descriptions of Centre activities such as ‘Fun for All’ and ‘Gardening Club’ suggest that they are primarily attended by, and created for children (and their families) even though they are meant to be applicable to all ages.

An analysis of the promotion and implementation of the Centre’s activities and services must also consider the time of day, and day of the week, activities and services are being offered. For example, do activities and services scheduled at certain times of the day, or on particular days of the week, influence which age groups attend? The following account of a conversation with Centre staff highlights the effect that the timing of scheduled events can have on participant numbers and the age range of participants:

“... one of the staff members ... who normally runs the dance classes was very excited to come over and tell me that she had had 26 participants ... she pointed out that the majority of the people in the morning dance class were over the age of 40 or 60.” (Jan 17, 2011 field notes)

In this example, the dance class has been scheduled on a Friday morning when many older adults are available to attend, but younger adults who are potentially at work or in school would be excluded. That said, the following observation of a conversation with the Centre manager demonstrates an attempt to offer activities that tie in with users already accessing the Centre at a specific time:

“... the intergenerational manager put the coffee mornings on the Wednesday now in order to run that at the same time ... the younger families are coming in because there’s services that they need.” (Feb 24, 2011 field notes)

In this example, the coffee morning was re-scheduled to attract younger families already in the Centre visiting the child health clinic.

9.5 Centre activities and services

In this section I consider the ‘age-ability’ and ‘age-appropriateness’ of Centre activities and services; whether an ‘intergenerational’ element was included; whether there was a wide age range of Centre users participating; and whether activities and services engaged Centre users appropriately (and how).

Using definitions found in the *Intergenerational Observational Scale Protocol*, Jarrott and Smith (2010) define an age-appropriate role as one that a participant would take on his or her own; and an ability-appropriate activity as one that provides a supportive environment for participants to use existing or developing abilities to assume a role. Examples of activities and services being both age- and ability-appropriate and inappropriate were found throughout my observations. An example of an activity being both age- and ability-appropriate can be seen in field notes describing a dance exercise class:

“... Everybody was able to participate ... there was a group of kids placed at the front of the class to watch ... some were sitting in a stroller; some were just sitting on the floor ... an older person who wasn’t able to stand properly for most of it was sat next to the back of the room with a chair so she could sit down whenever she felt the need.” (Mar 12, 2011 field notes)

By contrast, field notes taken during an intergenerational decoration activity where Centre staff were speaking with an older woman who had arrived for a special event, provides an example of how some activities were age-inappropriate. In this instance, Centre staff believed that knitting would be of interest to this older person simply because of her age, without considering other potential interests or her ability to knit:

“ ... instead of asking what her interests were, they just asked ... would she be interested in setting up a knitting group because they felt that would be good.”
(Dec 13, 2010 field notes)

The lack of an intergenerational approach can be seen in the delivery and implementation of many of the Centre's activities. For example, a description in my field notes of who attended a mediation workshop, offers an instance where the Centre could have delivered an intergenerational service:

“... all of the volunteers are probably in their 40s and 50s and I wonder again if they could not have included some younger people or had younger people come along to role play ...” (Feb 7, 2011 field notes)

As defined earlier, solitary behaviour refers to engaging in an activity without acknowledgement of others, and interactive behaviour as interaction with, or acknowledgement of, another individual. Observation of the Centre's Fish & Chip Friday lunchtime event illustrates that participants were playing a game that was solitary in nature, preventing them from interacting with people of other ages. My field notes highlight the fact that delivering a solitary activity like this did not provide participants with the opportunity to interact with one another in any meaningful way:

“... it wasn't an interaction where people had the chance to get up and talk to one another. It was very much a solitary activity...” (Feb 25, 2011 field notes)

A further example of a Centre activity that did not encourage participants to interact with other participants can be seen in my observations of a cookery class. In this description, the activity was designed and facilitated in a way that encouraged participants to prepare their meals in a solitary manner:

“... we prepared the mushrooms ... and within that time there was limited interaction outside of the family dyads ... the dad helped his three daughters, the grandmother helped her two grandchildren, the mum helped her son with the activity ... other than that, there was limited interaction between the groups ...”
(Jan 6, 2011 field notes)

9.5.1 Age and interaction

The age range of Centre users who participated in Centre activities and services varied greatly, from a good mix of ages to a restriction to only one age group. Observation of an intergenerational activity delivered by a local theatre group demonstrated a good age range of participants: from young children and their families to older couples aged 60 and over:

“... there was close to 60 people. A lot of families, groups of older women that came in together, older couples, mums and their children, mums and dads and their children, so it was a great mixture of people that came in.” (Jan 25-27, 2011 field notes)

Nevertheless, a limited age range was observed in a number of other activities and services as reflected in my field notes for a dance class:

“Only older people turned up for the dance class today ... worth noting that all the people coming in are self-segregating, all of them have come in to the IGC in pre-

established groups.” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes)

Similarly, a lack of young people using the Centre was also noted during a number of activities. Field notes taken after a day of observation of activities in the Centre highlight the fact that a specific age group is missing from the majority of activities and services delivered by the Centre:

“ ... I think we’re missing a larger age range there ... 13 to 18 ... why is that age group not coming into the centre? Are they not being asked to come in? Do they not feel they have a place there? Is it not something they’re interested in doing?”

(Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes)

Other observations show that Centre users interact with people of the same age as well as with people from other age groups during regularly scheduled activities and events. For example, observation before a drama workshop reveals interaction between the generations. In this instance, my field notes detail how participants waiting for their activity to begin interact with one another on a number of levels:

“... they seemed to be very comfortable with one another. They all addressed each other by first names, smiles and waves as the groups came in and they all congregated together in front of the lobby and sat down together...” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes)

My field notes describe how participants have segregated themselves into two groups, based on age, with older and younger people sitting at opposite ends of the Centre:

“... you could actually see a divide once the entire group was in there, between the older and younger people ... the front end of the lobby was filled with older people and the back end of the lobby was filled with younger people, or parents and children ... you could have put a dividing line in the middle of the lobby ... an interesting physical sense of the division between them.” (Mar 3-7, 2011 field notes)

9.6 Conclusion

This chapter concludes the presentation of my findings and has explored how people use the Centre and interact in the communal spaces within the Centre. I have shown how interactions differ with age or relationship between users, and considered whether the presence of particular people or groups in the Centre influences the nature and levels of interaction between the generations. I have also examined how other features of the Centre, such as staff management and facilitation, can foster or inhibit interaction between the generations. Finally, the chapter has reflected on how the Centre and what it offers was promoted and communicated to (potential) users. Included in the following chapter will be a consideration of how the processes involved in the development of the Centre influenced how it is used (and by whom). It is to this I now turn.

Chapter 10

Discussion and conclusion

10.0 Introduction

In this final chapter I draw together my empirical findings with the earlier review of the research, policy and practice literature into a discussion and conclusion. Here, I revisit my research questions, consider the extent to which they have been answered or not through the analysis and presentation of my data, and discuss the contribution this study has made to the current body of knowledge about intergenerational practice and shared sites. In particular, I discuss how the design of the social and built environment promotes or inhibits interaction between the generations and reflect on how the processes involved in the development of the Centre have influenced how it is used (and by whom). I then note the limitations of my work and provide recommendations for the further development of shared sites – in terms of practice and policy - as well as making suggestions for possible future research in this field.

As noted in Chapter 1, the overall aim of my study was to document and research the development of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre – most commonly referred to throughout this thesis as 'the Centre'. More specifically, the original research aims and objectives for the study were to:

- Tell the story of this unique development in the context of a national policy agenda which is now beginning to recognise the potential benefits of intergenerational practice;

- Consolidate what is currently a body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the benefits of intergenerational practice into a more systematic and critical review of the research literature;
- Build on the findings of research already undertaken on the impacts and benefits of shared-site intergenerational centres;
- Employ a mix of both conventional and more innovative qualitative, visual and observation research methods to explore what involvement in the Centre means to key players, and what working ‘intergenerationally’ actually entails.

Drawing on the evidence provided in Chapters 1-9 I discuss below the extent to which these aims were achieved and show how the research questions presented in Chapter 3 were answered.

10.1 Discussion

In this section I revisit each of my original research questions to draw out key findings, discuss the implications of these findings in relation to the current literature, and highlight the contribution that my findings have made to the current knowledge and evidence base.

- **Research Question 1: How has this unique purpose-built Centre been developed?**

This first research question was addressed primarily in Chapter 6 where I detailed the history and development of the Centre. Drawing on a range of documentary materials, I highlighted the London Development Agency's vision for the Centre, chronicling both the commissioning and bidding processes involved in the London Borough of Merton being chosen as the successful borough/Council.

In an attempt to combine elements of both the childcare and older people's strategies, the LDA suggested that an intergenerational centre might be one way to accomplish this and achieve positive outcomes for/between the generations. As such, all interested London boroughs were invited to apply for the capital funding to develop the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre through their Children's Centre programme. From 10 expressions of interest received, Merton was one of four London boroughs shortlisted and eventually selected to receive the award. At the time of the call, Merton Council was engaged in developing a number of Children's Centres with one in the east of the borough already having received planning permission. As such, Merton proposed that the Centre would be built alongside the newly commissioned Children's Centre –both centres would be designed with complementary and shared spaces and facilities. Moreover, Merton's intention was for Children, Schools and Families Services, and Adult Services to work together on developing the project through a small task group. The Centre is now located within Figge's Marsh – a smaller ward within one of the

most deprived areas in Merton where the council had already committed significant resources.

- **Research Question 2a: What does the research evidence from the past 20 years tell us about the impacts and benefits of IGSSs?**
- **Research Question 2b: To what extent has this research evidence been taken into account by the developers and designers of the Centre?**

An assessment of research, policy and practice evidence relating to intergenerational practice and the development of intergenerational shared sites (IGSSs) was completed and presented in Chapters 2 and 3. This showed that, over the past decade, intergenerational activities and programmes have been increasingly recognised in the UK with one particular organisation – the Centre for Intergenerational Practice - leading the way with its wide-reaching support of numerous organisations delivering and/or developing intergenerational work. What is more, a regional network in London - available to all practitioners working in the field of IP - where the Centre is located and a number of European networks mapping current practices and research were accessible and brought to the attention of, stakeholders responsible for the development of, and staff managing the Centre. Regrettably, despite being aware of these networks, stakeholders did not utilise them and/or access resources available through them which would have provided opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Unfortunately, collaboration with professionals in the field of intergenerational practice, who were seen to be 'experts', was not considered important by stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre. Stakeholders felt that speaking with other professionals who have previous experience and knowledge was one method for utilising examples of best practice and research. Nevertheless, examples of this happening were limited. While BJF/CIP were recognised for being leaders in the field, stakeholders responsible for the development and design of the Centre made minimal effort to connect with these organisations and, as such, did not utilise the expertise available through them. By contrast, the staff in the Centre who are now responsible for the delivery of its activities, have not only been engaged with the local networks available to them, but are also beginning to utilise the expertise of organisations such as the BJF/CIP that specialise in the IP field.

Also noteworthy is that involvement in these networks and partnerships during the development of the Centre would have provided stakeholders with access to a range of resources, case studies and guidelines for planning and implementing intergenerational projects. Instead, utilisation of best practice and research during the development and design of the Centre was often explained in terms of stakeholder's 'professional experiences' that could be drawn upon. Relying on stakeholders own 'professional experiences' and the local council's previous experience from other projects were seen as key to employing examples of best practice and research.

A number of stakeholders, including the commissioners, planners, and architects of the Centre, all admitted that they were unaware of what, if any, examples of best practice and research were used. As such, stakeholders proposed a number of reasons for this lack of utilisation: there were limited examples to draw on; and the uniqueness of the project/building meant that there were not many examples to draw on. Why this transpired is crucial to any discussion and recommendations for further work in this area given that, in this instance, there has been a clear absence of stakeholders and practitioners identifying, retrieving or utilising existing research and best practice in the field. This is despite the fact that, from the literature review, it is evident that there is a significant amount of material which could be drawn on. While IGSS programmes continue to grow in the US, with accompanying manuals and advice for practitioners on how to plan, design and support IGSSs readily available, the development of shared sites in the UK has been limited. As yet, minimal work has been done to determine whether it might be possible to transfer this guidance to a UK or European context. As a result, stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre either found it difficult to access or were unaware of this literature. What is more, these stakeholders did not believe this information and guidance would be applicable to this site, within a UK context.

Consequently, I would suggest that stakeholders still involved in this particular Centre and/or others wanting to embark on such a development, might benefit from beginning to access wider EU networks that have experience developing and delivering IGSSs, and make use of guidance available to them from the US. How to bridge the gap between current examples of research in the US and

practitioners wanting to develop IGSSs is crucial to the on-going development of such sites in the UK. If we are not able to accomplish this, the outcomes of similar developments will not change and/or improve as a result of drawing on examples of best practice and research and expertise currently available in the field.

- **Research Question 3a: How has the design of the Centre - both the social and built environments - promoted or inhibited interaction between the generations?**

The review of the literature in Chapters 2 and 3 clearly demonstrated that one of the critical issues emerging within the intergenerational field is a lack of attention to how the built environment plays a role in influencing intergenerational interaction. From an intergenerational perspective, the objective of the design is to create an environment that is appropriate for various age groups, but is also conducive to intergenerational interactions – that is, an environment that fosters meaningful engagement between generations. Unfortunately, the majority of professionals in the IG field are not trained as design professionals. Conversely, it is not common practice for design professionals, such as architects, to design environments that accommodate various generations and facilitate intergenerational exchange. This was certainly the case in my study: key stakeholders (i.e. architects and developers) admitted they had limited experience with intergenerational practice in general, and no experience in designing or delivering an IGSS and yet, they were expected to work with design professionals to build such a facility. Similarly, the architects involved in design of the Centre had

no direct experience of designing spaces to specifically foster interaction between the generations.

Also highlighted in my literature review, is that IGSS programmes remain a relatively new phenomenon in the UK with only a few examples identified in the literature. Nonetheless, there are a range of manuals from the US that offer guidance on how to plan and design effective IGSSs. Therefore, key to the overall design of the Centre was stakeholders' understanding(s) of what an intergenerational centre is (*is not*) and views about how the design of the Centre could impact on the level and nature of interaction between generations.

Stakeholders often defined an IGSS or intergenerational centre – and what the Centre's design would look like - by comparing it to other types of centres or facilities where similar people of all ages might meet. Despite the fact that several stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre did not want it to be similar, many could not see how it would differ from either a Community Centre or a Children's Centre. Even more explicit was the uncertainty amongst stakeholders about how the actual physical design of the Centre might foster interaction among the generations. This doubt manifested itself in one noteworthy way: mainly in a strong and prevalent belief that it was the Centre's activities and services, as well as how they were managed, that would dictate how the Centre was used and that this would prove more important in influencing levels of interaction between the generations than various aspects of the design. Nevertheless, some examples of

how the design of the Centre may influence intergenerational interaction were discussed, and are drawn attention to again here.

Flexibility in the space and design has been identified by stakeholders involved in the development and design of the Centre as crucial to the design of an 'intergenerational' environment that allows for planned and unplanned activity and different levels and types of interaction between the generations (Epstein & Boisvert, 2005). Overall, stakeholders placed great importance on combining the open space in the middle of the Centre for groups to participate in activities or receive services, with smaller adaptable spaces for more intimate one-to-one work. Designing rooms of varying sizes with flexible spaces that will develop and that users can 'grow into', was proposed by stakeholders responsible for the Centre's design as a key feature in the design of the Centre. This was certainly achieved: as the Centre layout shows (see appendix 11), there are multiple uses for the variety of spaces available and, through observation; it was evident that all spaces in the Centre were used for a variety of purposes by a range of Centre users.

Another key consideration in the overall design of an intergenerational space is the décor and other sensory factors (i.e. soft background music) which have been found to generate positive emotions and social engagement (Kaplan et al., 2007). For example, comfortable seating and a 'good view' of other people would enhance the potential for subsequent socialising (Kaplan et al., 2007). The

atmosphere, created by furnishings offered in the Centre varied from providing a warm and welcoming space (i.e. back of the lobby where people sat and participated in activities) which potential users would want to visit, to a clinical and soulless space (i.e. front part of the lobby where people enter) users would avoid. While furniture and seating was available for participants to use, the way in which it was arranged at times did not invite either formal or informal interaction among participants of different ages. What is more, the often-closed doors of the children's space attached to the open central space, and lack of windows to see what children were present and doing in the Centre, created a feeling of segregation between the generations which may have inhibited interaction.

Observing the Centre in its everyday use, it was also possible to assess the 'functionality' of the design as experienced by users of this environment. Staff working within the Centre suggested that the 'functionality' of the Centre was not adequately considered during the design process. When interviewed staff working within the Centre discussed a lack of designated and adequate storage spaces and the impracticality of the security measures put in place to protect staff. For example, the location of the storage space designated for buggies outside has forced both staff and Centre users to come in and out of the building a number of times in order to store their buggy on site. What is more, Centre staff felt that the front office where their offices are located were not adequately designed in terms of staff safety as the 'hatch' or opening between them and the general public is too large and anyone can pass through.

The literature suggests 'traffic patterns' within an IGSS should allow for easy accessibility for all participants within the allocated space. Likewise, stakeholders proposed that creating shared open spaces, such as the central space in the middle of the Centre that opens onto other rooms in the building, would allow for easy movement throughout the spaces where people can move freely. More specifically, this design would allow Centre users to come together or pass by one another uninterrupted as encouraging informal interactions among the generations was central to the design process. This proposal did transpire – the central space in the Centre was consistently used as a 'stop gap' for Centre users while they were waiting for an activity or service to begin, or after one was finished, or to participate in an activity/receive a service. Equally, the flow from inside to outside spaces was regarded by stakeholders involved in the design of the Centre as another significant feature of the design that could foster interaction between the generations. The idea that the Centre's design could encourage flow between various spaces inside/outside the Centre did in fact occur – Centre users were regularly observed passing through the Centre with ease to the outside spaces and vice versa.

- **Research Question 3b: How has the provision of services and activities in the Centre met the needs of users?**
- **Research Question 4a: In what ways has the Centre sought to involve and engage older adults and young people of varying ages and needs?**

- **Research Question 4b: How have the processes involved in the development of the Centre influenced how it is used (and by whom)?**

The three research questions listed above have been considered together in this discussion as they are interlinked and I would suggest cannot be answered independently of one another. Answers to, and discussion of, these three questions all explore how people use and interact within the Centre may differ with age or relationship between users. As such, the possible consequences of, and explanations for, the patterns of how the Centre was used and by whom will now be considered in relation to processes involved in the development of the Centre.

However, it should be noted here that a full consideration of research question 3b (above) proved to be difficult and incomplete. I was only able to remain in the field for a certain length of time to complete my field work and, unfortunately, there was a lengthy delay in the opening the Centre. As a result, users who may have been attending the Centre for some time and could potentially participate in my study did not yet exist in sufficient numbers. More time would have been necessary to address this research question adequately – mainly to allow Centre users to spend time in and use the Centre before they could respond to the question of how the Centre may have met their needs. Therefore, in this discussion I am only able to report on the ‘observed’ *effects* of the Centre and its programmes on participants, rather than fully address the original research question which asked about whether the Centre met the *needs* of participants..

From the outset, the primary source of funding available to develop the Centre came from a children's services budget - the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) - and not from a budget that focussed on other age groups such as older adults and young people, or was designated as 'intergenerational'. Likewise, the majority of stakeholders involved in this development were based within children's services within the council, either through the DCSF or Department for Education. Only one stakeholder involved in the development of the Centre, from a list of 30, was listed as a representative for older people. Also missing from the list of stakeholders who were responsible for the development of the Centre was local community representation and potential Centre users themselves. What is more, a particular focus on delivering better outcomes for children and their families through childcare and employment services located within the Centre was seen as critical to the overall vision of the Centre. All of these factors combined could have contributed to the Centre's focus on children and their families, to the neglect of other age groups necessary to provide an intergenerational centre (for all ages).

How the Centre and its staff communicated what the Centre 'is', who it is for and how it can be used, had a considerable effect on who used the centre and for what purpose. Signs (or lack of) and promotional materials seen throughout the Centre and in the community that communicate to potential users what the Centre is and what activities and services are offered suggested to potential users that it is not a place for all ages to meet. For example, promotional materials focused on what activities and services the Centre offered children and their families. Therefore, activities and services were not commonly promoted as 'intergenerational'.

Furthermore, staff often described the Centre as primarily a 'children's centre' and Centre activities were frequently designated by terms such as 'after-school club' or 'workshop'. All of these factors help explain why the primary users were children and their families; and why other groups such as older adults, young people, and adults without children, were notable by their absence in the Centre.

From my observations, there was also a striking presence of staff in the Centre. In fact, staff presence was so strong in the Centre that it often felt like they outnumbered Centre users. This may be accounted for by a number of factors. As noted above, both the management and delivery of the Centre was led by the local council (i.e. council staff) with limited involvement of potential Centre users and a clear lack of public consultation. This may have led to certain age groups not using the Centre as they may not have been aware of it, did not identify with it or did not see how they could use the Centre. This leaves only staff to use and occupy the space.

Another significant finding was that the overwhelming majority of users were observed either participating in an activity or receiving a service at the Centre. More specifically, young people were rarely observed in the Centre unless it was for a specific school activity such as a play scheduled during school hours. When older adults were present, they were more likely to participate in specific adult focused activities. Similarly, most interactions observed occurred just before or immediately after a specific activity or service took place in the Centre. As a result, periods between these activities or services were quiet - resulting in the Centre

often feeling unoccupied. An emphasis on attending activities and accessing services may be the result of the Centre's, albeit limited, vision and strategy – what stakeholders promoted and believed the Centre should do/be. It was felt by many involved in the development of the Centre that it should be a hub for the community but the reality was in fact very different.

The Centre was often observed being used as a 'day-care' or 'play space' for a number of younger children who were visiting the Centre with their parents. Central spaces within the Centre were repeatedly used by younger children to play, often unsupervised by parents. As well as the reasons noted above, this outcome can be explicitly linked to the Centre's initial vision and primary focus on delivering outcomes for children and their families. What is more, what would form the basis of the Centre and how significant the Children's Centre was within the overall Centre was discussed at length by stakeholders involved in its development: was it one of co-location - delivering a Children's Centre that was based within a larger Intergenerational Centre - or was it to be mainly a Children's Centre with an intergenerational element? This decision was never agreed on and may have also contributed to younger children and their families using the Centre as a 'day care' or 'play space'.

While the majority of activities and services provided at the Centre had the potential to be inclusive of all ages and promote intergenerational interaction, a number of activities and services either excluded or deterred certain age groups from participating. Only capital money to build the facility was made available with

no specific revenue stream attached to the project for developing Centre activities and services further. While many stakeholders recognised that funding coming solely from the children's services budget, and not from a budget that was designated as an intergenerational one, would be a challenge, nothing was done to alter this. What is more, stakeholder's limited understanding of the IGSS model; their lack of experience in delivering IP; and minimal use of examples of best practice may have all contributed to activities and services excluding specific age groups. These factors may have also influenced the types and levels of interaction between Centre users.

While the majority of behaviours observed in the Centre were interactive, most interactions occurred between people from the same age group. What is more, interactions with other age groups were mainly with staff in the Centre, with a very limited number of specific 'intergenerational' interactions. Besides the reasons listed in the previous section (i.e. lack of understanding and experience in delivering IP and an IGSS model), ineffective staff management and lack of facilitation of the Centre's activities and service may be additional reasons for why limited interaction between different generations occurred. It is to this possible explanation that I now turn.

As my literature review revealed, the quality of staff working in IGSSs is a key element for success and staff have a potentially important role in the planning and implementation of IG programming. More specifically, staff who possess the skills and knowledge to meet age-appropriate developmental needs, and are able to

develop and implement IGSS programmes, was consistently highlighted in the literature as a critical factor in the management and delivery of a variety of intergenerational programmes. Furthermore, many staff do not have appropriate skills and training to deal with both old and young people, as initially staff may be skilled in dealing with one generation, but not the other. The literature review has also shown that appropriate planning and implementation is essential to meet the complex demands of activities and services that are appropriate for all ages. Equally, how activities and services are planned and delivered can influence how the generations interact with one another in any given setting.

Unfortunately, staff involved in the Centre were not able to effectively manage and facilitate the activities and services they were providing. As an example, Centre staff were often observed making minimal effort to engage with participants and/or facilitate the interaction of participants during scheduled activities. This finding may be related to the fact that Centre staff had primarily worked with children and their families and had had no training in working 'intergenerationally'. If Centre staff had received such training and attained skills about how to work with people of all ages, this finding may have been rather different.

Providing structure and purpose to activities and services within an IGSS such as the Centre has also been established in the literature as an important aspect of management and facilitation, specifically to promote communication and foster interaction between the generations. Again though, minimal effort was made by staff to provide an explanation of, or purpose to, the scheduled activities.

Moreover, a lack of attention to time keeping was also observed: staff members were repeatedly observed starting and finishing late or early, often without any explanation or warning to participants. In addition, Centre users attending an activity or service delivered by Centre staff, were frequently left unsupervised without any direction as to what they were meant to be doing. All of these factors may have contributed to minimal interaction between the generations.

Limited involvement of potential users of the Centre was also noted in chapters 7 and 9. A number of reasons for this occurring were proposed by stakeholders, including: that engaging with potential users was not necessary during the initial stages of the process; and the majority of the work done throughout the development of the Centre was, and should have been, completed within the local authority. When instances of user involvement were provided, representation by professionals (mainly from the local Council itself – at the project and programme boards) was one of the main examples. What is more, many stakeholders acknowledged a lack of involvement with particular age groups – notably older adults and young people - and voiced their concerns over the ramifications of this lack of involvement.

The development of the Centre was managed and led by children's services that had more experience, and developed better partnerships with, other children's services. Management of the Centre was 'Council led' with restricted involvement from voluntary organisations in the local community. These aforementioned factors, combined with a predominant focus on delivering the building within

budget and short time frame, resulted in other important issues such as ensuring Centre users of varying ages and needs were involved in the process of developing the Centre to be neglected.

To summarise, the Centre - from inception to delivery - has been based on, and developed within, the context of the DCSF's Children's Centre agenda with no training or skills development in the area of intergenerational practice. I have suggested that this finding may have influenced how it is used (and by whom). More specifically, the Centre's funding stream(s), stakeholder involvement and expertise, project management and vision and strategy for the Centre, were all based and focused on children and their families. As a result, the Centre often felt like it was a children's centre that provided services and activities primarily for children and their families. Likewise, I have shown that missing from the design, consultation, and participation in the Centre were older adults and young people, and I suggested that this may have resulted in the limited interaction between the generations which I observed. Finally, the importance of intergenerational training and skills for staff cannot be emphasised enough as a fundamental element underpinning staff behaviour and Centre programmes and activities.

- **Research Question 5: What lessons can be learnt to assist both the Centre itself and others who might be interested in developing similar initiatives?**

This last research question is addressed in Section 10.2 below where I make specific recommendations for the Centre itself and for the implementation of future practice and policy developments in the area. The last section of this chapter also provides suggestions for future research on designing, developing and evaluating IGSSs.

10.2 Suggestions for Practice and Policy

10.2.1 Recommendations for the Centre itself

The current state of IP in the Centre and the local community it aims to serve, as stated in the previous section, has been influenced by a number of factors including past funding arrangements, stakeholder experience and the projected outcomes and limitations that these factors have brought with it. In this section, I suggest the following recommendations should be taken as the next crucial step in developing IP in the Centre further.

A. Research and explain what the Centre is currently, and will be doing, by:

- Completing a mapping exercise with stakeholders still involved in the Centre and the local community to identify the needs of current and potential users of the Centre in the area it aims to serve;

- Developing a clear communication and promotion plan to endorse the Centre more thoroughly and engage new/existing partners more closely with the work the Centre is undertaking;
- Developing a shared understanding amongst all stakeholders involved in the continued delivery of the Centre of IP and its added value for all generations.

B. Re-evaluate the current strategy for the Centre by:

- Managing conflicting priorities of the Centre with some of the wider IP approaches taken throughout the Borough of Merton;
- Bringing key stakeholders from Merton Council who are still responsible for the delivery of the Centre together to simplify and make clear, current priorities and outcomes for the Centre;
- Presenting the benefits /added value of using an IP approach to existing, and potential, partners;
- Identifying the Centre's 'hub' (in-house) services and 'spoke' (outreach purpose) as two distinct developments that need to be planned separately;
- Recognising the Centre as more than a Children's Centre;

- Strengthening the IP ‘offer’ of the Centre through the provision of services and activities that reflect the needs of all ages the Centre aims to serve.

C. Encourage the wider engagement of the local community, particularly older adults, in the Centre by:

- Building new, or reinforcing current, partnerships with organisations focused on the needs and voices of older adults (i.e. Age UK – Merton, Merton’s Seniors Forum);
- Recruiting and supporting the involvement of more volunteers in the Centre (specifically older volunteers);
- Including older adults in staff training to develop awareness of ageing issues with Centre staff (who all currently have a background in working solely with children and young people);
- Strengthening the ‘community voice’ in the delivery of the Centre (its activities, services and overall strategy) by embedding community members and Centre users within the Centre’s governance and management structure.

D. Review and alter current governance structures and management of the Centre in order to provide:

- Clearer communication and understanding of roles/responsibility between different levels of management and governance structures;
- Better engagement with the local community in the development of various projects and specific programmes of work;
- Appropriate identity with, and ownership of, the Centre's strategy among all those involved with the continuing development and management of the Centre;
- Use the local community, Centre users of varying ages, as a resource in the management of the Centre and as ambassadors for IP (and the Centre).

E. Encourage staff training and development and foster a more confident and constructive working environment by:

- Investing in further staff development to support future team building;
- Working with Centre staff to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Centre to be an intergenerational space for all generations to use are clear and agreed upon;
- Providing intensive initial, with on-going supplementary, staff training that involves an introduction to the field of intergenerational practice;

- Providing Centre staff who are facilitating intergenerational work with the skills and confidence to deal with the unexpected and be able to react appropriately when issues arise;
- Expanding the skills and experience of Centre staff to include working with hard-to-reach groups and older people;
- Training all staff involved with the Centre, regardless of their previous work experience, to use a life course approach in all of their work;
- Creating additional time and space for Centre staff to think more creatively and provide more innovative ideas for working 'intergenerationally'

10.2.2 Wider recommendations for intergenerational practice and policy

To date, colleagues in the field have consistently used the term 'intergenerational shared site' in reviewing the literature and evidence. In the US, and elsewhere, IGSSs have come to signify a physical environment deliberately constructed or redeveloped to enable two or more generations to more readily interact in a location designed originally to provide a service to each group separately. Perhaps a more fundamental re-appraisal needs to be made of the purpose and outcomes of such initiatives before we start changing the nature of this delivery model. For example, colleagues have recently proposed the idea of 'shared space', rather than 'shared site', as a way of suggesting that the aims of an IGSS can be met by a broader range of environments than just co-located services.

While my research has suggested that a purpose-built intergenerational centre may be one model that could help to foster interaction between the generations, in the current economic climate there is unlikely to be sufficient funding for building new purpose-built or co-located intergenerational sites. From the limited evidence available, I would question whether replicating such a model is necessary given the opportunities to utilise existing spaces (i.e. public libraries, local community centres, churches) that already promote opportunities for mutual exchange between the generations. Such a strategy would be more efficient in terms of time, personnel, and use of (limited) resources that already exist. More specifically, I would suggest that it might be possible to develop and deliver a pilot programme across the UK that is predicated on the idea that many spaces currently being used for the sole purpose of one generation (i.e. schools, retirement homes) - or spaces utilised by various generations independently (i.e. library, community centres, sporting facilities) - could in fact be used 'intergenerationally' with a little imagination and some pump priming funding. What is more, this model or concept could also be considered as not just a physically constructed site, but expand our thinking to outside spaces such as parks, town centres, or playgrounds.

A model based around 'communities of interest', rather than constructed around short term projects, may be more sustainable and have greater long term impact. By communities of interest I refer to those whose primary focus may be such topics as the environment, food, sport, or the arts, that create a space for people to come together around shared aspirations and mutual interests. For example, findings presented in Chapter 9 demonstrate the success of an intergenerational

drama workshop run by a local theatre company that was based on a common interest: both older adults and children present were interested in participating in a workshop focussed around the theatre and had a common interest in the production and performance of a play. What is more, if the ultimate aim is to offer and facilitate spaces that build generationally connected communities, such initiatives might also be based on the aspiration of community members themselves and their vision of what constitutes success, not just on the ideas of a select few who believe they know what is best for the community.

I would also suggest that a number of key factors relating to staff training and skill set(s) be assessed and adequately addressed at the outset of all intergenerational programmes, including the implementation and on-going management of an intergenerational shared site model. As such, all staff working in an intergenerational shared space or site require the training and skills to work with both young and old people; need to be able to display a commitment and motivation to working 'intergenerationally'; and be allocated sufficient time to be involved and to both understand and appreciate the aims and objectives of an intergenerational shared site model.

While it has become increasingly clear that intergenerational programmes and services are now more widely established, the nature of the settings in which intergenerational activities might take place has been relatively neglected. Nevertheless, I believe that both the physical and social design of a shared space can contribute to potential interaction across the generations. For that reason,

environmental issues must be considered from the outset, with a need to understand how decisions about the physical environment affect immediate/direct and longer-term intergenerational relationships. Moreover, I would stress to anyone considering embarking on the process of developing a shared space that they need to give equal weight to the activities, programmes and services (i.e. what happens within these spaces) as to various design principles and the end users involved.

A further consideration is around people's increasing concerns about safeguarding issues – for both children and vulnerable adults - in delivering an IGSS model. This is a specific concern for those places and organisations where young(er) people's groups or older volunteers have become extremely cautious and certain activities have not taken place. Therefore, there is a need to tackle the issue of risk and to develop specific guidance for organisations wanting to promote intergenerational community activities in a way that balances fears about safety, with the opportunity for the generations to interact.

To summarise, from the review of existing literature and research, and from this study's findings, I suggest that for a shared space to be successful, it should aim to possess a number of essential attributes:

- 1) Participants from different generations are actively involved in the planning and running of all activities;

- 2) All staff be trained to work with both older adults and young people and have an understanding of human development from a life-course perspective. As part of this, staff could be required to undertake ageism awareness training and understand and promote the benefits of integrated working across various departments;
- 3) Staff and participants approach risk assessment (i.e. safeguarding children and older adults) as a positive opportunity to build safe relationships and partnerships;
- 4) However the space is constructed or defined, everyone continually questions how it can be made all 'age friendly' to facilitate interaction across - and between - the generations;
- 5) Both formal and informal opportunities exist – or are created - for people of different generations to come together and enjoy regular contact, both formally and informally;
- 6) There is an explicit understanding amongst staff and all stakeholders involved in any IGSS, of the fundamental aim to allow all generations to collaborate on positive activities of shared interest and mutual benefit.

Turning from a focus on site-specific recommendations to look at the national picture, it is evident that as yet there is an absence of a set of agreed national

principles that describe, or intergenerational policy to guide, intergenerational practice and programming. In addition, there is: a lack of cooperative thinking between government departments; limited availability of (mainstream) funding; and rising concern about intergenerational equity. Together, these further complicate the promotion, understanding and impact of IP and IGSSs. Therefore, joined up thinking across government departments and political parties - at a local and national level – with adequate long-term funding is critical to the long-term viability of IP and IGSSs. Additionally, a national strategy for working ‘intergenerationally’ matched with local priorities, as well as including the generations in a productive debate and discussion around the issue(s) of intergenerational equity in an open public arena is required if we are to show policy makers that communities can be strengthened both economically and socially through initiatives that promote intergenerational solidarity, rather than conflict.

To summarise, as public resources shrink and opportunities for the generations to interact remain limited, more collaborative approaches to the delivery of services and programming will become a necessary step for all of society, in practice and at all levels of government. Intergenerational practice and shared sites could be embedded into mainstream social policy and practice, with all levels and sectors of government recognising the value of intergenerational relations and IP as a tool for social change across a number of key social policies. On a more practical level, for any shared space to be successful, one needs acknowledgement by all involved that this process takes thoughtful planning; staff who are trained and able to work with both older and younger people; an established and agreed upon need in the

community; and a considerable amount of time and understanding, as well as the continuous involvement of potential users.

10.3 Limitations of the Study

All research projects have strengths and limitations and before making recommendations about what future research may be appropriate, I reflect here on the limitations of the chosen methods for my study. I made a case in Chapter 4 for the advantages of using a qualitative approach that combines a case study method with ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews for my study. However, I also acknowledge that there are both difficulties and limitations to such an approach. Issues around representation and generalisability, replication, observer/researcher bias and time, are all potential challenges to this methodology. These will now be discussed in turn.

10.3.1 Representation and generalisability

Given the fact that a case study focuses on a single unit, a single instance, the issue of generalisability has been raised by many stakeholders involved in the initial design and development of the Centre as one limitation. This study was constructed as a case study of the development and design of one specific Centre (site) in one local authority (Merton Council); derived from the explanation and perspectives of approximately twenty-five stakeholders; sited within a specific geographic location in London; and within a set of particular political and socio-

economic circumstances. Additionally, because I was the sole researcher involved in the study, it was impossible to 'tell the whole story' of the development and design of the Centre. As such, the story told has been limited to observations and findings deemed important and crucial to answering my initial research questions. Findings are not, nor have I claimed that they are, representative of other intergenerational centres or shared sites that already exist, or the perspectives of other councils who may develop such centres in the future.

This (case) study does not therefore aim to generalise findings from this Centre to others, but to reflect on and learn from the experiences of those involved in the development and use of this particular Centre. So, whilst I acknowledge that my study is not representative, I nonetheless argue that the findings which emerge from this study provide a background and form a useful structure for understanding the *experience* of other intergenerational centres and shared sites and potential users of this model/concept.

10.3.2 Reliability and validity

Case studies, also using an ethnographic approach, have one considerable drawback related to validity - it cannot control for many external variables, and reliability – it can be difficult to replicate the research (Mason, 2002). In order to address the limitation of validity in my study, triangulation was employed by using different data sources and different data collection methods: I thus ended up with a

qualitative approach that combines a case study method with ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews.

Reliability is concerned with the reproduction of procedures and findings. In other words, the study can be repeated by using the same procedures of the original research and the researcher can have consistent interpretation by using the same procedures. Since ethnographic research relies on the context, it is important to specify the conditions of a given setting so that the comparison can be made. Therefore, I have tried to address these problems by describing the methodology as comprehensively as possible in chapters 4 and 5. This has been done by providing the reader with an account of my research design and description of my field work so that other researchers could reconstruct the same study should they wish. Moreover, reliability with this method is also a concern in relation to the wide variety of interpretations that potentially arise from the thematic analysis. Therefore, to increase and/or improve on the reliability of my findings, I have been as transparent as possible in describing my process of data analysis so that the reader and future researchers can follow through the processes that have led to my findings and conclusions.

10.3.3 Difficulties during fieldwork

During the fieldwork component of my study, a number of practical and unexpected problems occurred. This resulted in a host of amendments to my research design and time table:

- A number of activities/services and special events were not listed in the Centre's schedule that describes what is happening and when so I may have missed a number of opportunities to observe potential interaction among Centre users if I had not been diligent in looking for other promotional materials and spoken with Centre staff regularly;
- Timing was a significant factor during fieldwork, which in the end took place from Nov 2008 to April 2011. I spent significantly longer in the field than was originally intended partly because a 6 month leave of absence had to be taken in order for the Centre to be completed and operational and so that observation of participants using the Centre was possible;
- While organising and conducting stakeholder interviews, a number of stakeholders (approximately four in total) had to be continuously invited to take part over a long period of time. Unfortunately, certain stakeholders were not interviewed in the end, leaving a potential gap in adequate representation of stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre;
- In order to explore how children and young people were involved in the development and implementation of the Centre and its activities or services, a number of methods, such as focus groups with older adults and young people and "story boards" with younger children, were considered and planned. However, due to limited opportunities for interaction between the generations to occur and a lack of involvement of children and young people throughout the project, it was not possible to explore how these age

groups felt about these experiences. Therefore, these methods were not included in the study.

10.3.4 Researcher bias

I acknowledge that myself as the researcher and the research participants are in many ways inextricably linked: all knowledge is situated and contextual. In qualitative case studies, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. While this can be advantageous, quite often the researcher is left to rely on her own instincts and abilities throughout the study (Mason, 2002). Some have suggested that this lack of rigour is linked to the problem of bias, introduced by the subjectivity of the researcher and others involved in the case (Mason, 2002).

Within the limits of my study, I had the potential to affect data collected and using a case study method could have been used to confirm my own preconceived notions as the sole researcher involved in this study. However, this argument against case study research misses the point of doing this type of research. The strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference - ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically (Merriam, 2009). As Merriam (2009, p. 12) states, qualitative approaches "... do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be discounted. They do not attempt to simplify what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because a case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers." While I made a considerable effort to distance

myself from stakeholders, Centre staff and users, I accept that my presence alone may have affected the outcome of what I observed during stakeholder meetings and time spent in the Centre observing users and staff.

As an integral 'actor' in the production and collection of my research data and analysis, I have tried to be open about this by introducing reflexivity into my study, but I accept that it is impossible to be completely objective about my own bias and subjectivity. This study has been shaped by my own academic interests in the field of gerontology and work/life experiences of working primarily with older adults in the community. Therefore, I acknowledge that bias may have shaped the ways in which I generated and analysed the data. For example, I recognise that the way in which this study focuses upon the importance of the built environment and the engagement (or not) of older adults in the design and development of the Centre, has a number of limitations. As a result, I accept that there are further methods of constructing and interpreting the data.

When my research was conducted must also be acknowledged as a potential limitation to this study. While it was beneficial to conduct my research early on in the development of the Centre to capture stakeholders' initial understanding of, and ideas for, developing and designing an intergenerational centre, it did not allow as much time later on in the development of the Centre to observe further the outcome(s) of such a development. Therefore, my observations and subsequent findings of *if* and *how* the generations used the Centre may be somewhat premature and insufficient. Consequently, one recommendation would be to revisit the Centre now that it has been open for a substantial amount of time

and continue observing how the Centre is being used and by whom. Such recommendations for future research are what I turn to now.

10.4 Recommendations for future research and theory

Because my study was the first to explore the development of a purpose-built IGSS in the UK, suggestions for further research and theory-related practice are crucial. Based on the findings of my study, I suggest a number of possible options for further exploration – including both general and specific research issues related to the field and discuss how this study has contributed to the theoretical literature cited in early chapters of my thesis, including recommendations for how the development and implementation of intergenerational shared spaces relates to theory and vice versa.

10.4.1 General recommendations from current research

As highlighted in chapter 3 of my literature review, there is a limited amount of research being conducted in Europe, especially in comparison to the majority of literature on IGSSs that has been conducted in the US. While I proactively looked for literature in the UK, examples were minimal in comparison to the literature available from the US. Additionally, practical examples of IGSSs in the UK were non-existent – the only examples to review were either a single generational facility or community setting that promoted use by people of all ages, but where

activities were not intentionally intergenerational. I would therefore suggest that more research about IP in general is needed in the UK and, more specifically, research about the potential benefits and impacts of an integrated shared site model.

As highlighted earlier in chapter 2, literature in the field contains very few evaluation and research studies of IGSSs: studies that do exist are small scale and largely anecdotal in nature. There are also minimal documented research studies that draw on established theoretical frameworks. The majority of literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 utilised one theoretical framework – Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development. There has also been an emphasis on the immediate or short-term benefits (i.e. attitudinal change) and outcomes (i.e. more frequent contact between the generations). As such, it would be helpful if future research could consider utilising other pertinent theoretical perspectives in order to build a better understanding of the medium and long- term benefits of IGSSs, and explore the developmental nature of intergenerational interactions and relationships in greater detail. More specifically, to understand the meaning and significance behind these newly formed relationships, a theoretical approach that explores the *nature* of the interaction between the different generations must be applied. What is more, the level of interaction between the generations within a specified space or ‘building’ needs to be explored, together with an emphasis on the interaction *between* people and their environments, rather than on just one or the other exclusively. Such a perspective will help to identify how a physical environment, such as an IGSS, promotes or inhibits the interactions taking place within it.

Another critical limitation of much of IGSS research is that it does not document or explore the processes involved in bringing the generations together. Evaluations have primarily focussed on outcomes and have ignored more fundamental questions pertaining to whether, and how, participants interact. Consequently, more understanding and research is needed at the level of informal and spontaneous intergenerational interactions in varied settings.

Intergenerational practice is relevant across all generations, but many projects and research has tended to focus on the two ends of the life course: primarily older adults and younger children. However, this neglects large segments of the population (i.e. working age adults). Whilst there is continuing debate about whether 'intergenerational' means 'all ages' or just two contrasting generations, I would suggest that there is a case to shift our attention to a life course perspective – and consider what makes a society for all ages. This is also pertinent because of the tendency for evaluating the benefits of IGSSs in purely individual terms and not considering the impact of this type of model on the local community and wider society.

10.4.2 Specific recommendations from current research

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, the majority of previous research on IGSSs has focused on the most common US model - a model based primarily on a physically constructed shared site that has childcare integrated with adult day (care) programmes. Additionally, despite the fact that IGSSs are meant to serve all

generations, the majority of current evaluation and research literature has focused on either the very young or frail older participants. Consequently, future research needs to engage people of varying ages and needs, and explore a variety of IGSS settings (i.e. schools, libraries, churches) rather than relying on a single daycare-based model.

One of the critical issues emerging within the intergenerational field, which echoes developments in environmental gerontology, is how the built environment fosters interaction between the generations. The intergenerational literature is beginning to highlight the fact that minimal attention has been paid to how the physical environment plays a role in promoting or inhibiting engagement. While attention has been paid to the goal of creating intergenerational settings, the objective of the design is to not only create an environment that is appropriate for various age groups, but one which also fosters engagement between the generations.

Although some studies have begun to consider the importance of the built environment, future research could seek to explore, in greater detail, the role of the built environment in promoting or inhibiting engagement between the generations. Moreover, what is meant by 'built environment' needs to be expanded to not only include the physical space of an IGSS, but its general surroundings (i.e. location of the space in its local community, local amenities, transportation, amount of footfall), and other potential intergenerational shared spaces that are not traditional or physical in nature (i.e. skate parks, town square). Likewise, research in this area could begin to explore the issue of safeguarding, how it may

affect the design and role of the environment in influencing intergenerational interaction and vice versa.

While a few studies have begun to consider undertaking cost-benefit analyses of IGSS programmes, much more needs to be done in order to explore and compare the costs and benefit of creating new (purpose-built) intergenerational sites, versus developing existing spaces where the generations already - or could potentially - come together. Such information could provide evidence of the financial benefit of utilising such an approach. What is more, the source(s) of funding (i.e. who the funders are and how the funding is provided) for the development or implementation of an IGSS has not been researched in any great detail. More specifically, how such funding sources can affect the various outcome(s) of an IGSS could also be considered in future research studies.

This study has started a discussion of what the concept of IGSSs means by exploring the potential difference between this model/definition and other spaces such as community or children's centres. However, future research might also consider the importance of the physical building and begin to ask questions such as whether this is needed, and could it happen anywhere? More specifically, research ought to ask – is it the 'building' (physical space), participants and activities within that space or some combination of these factors that best fosters interaction(s) between the generations?

10.4.3 IGSS-related theory: contributions and recommendations

I turn now to discuss how my study has contributed to the theoretical literature cited in the early chapters of my thesis. I also consider how theory may be applied further in this field, paying specific attention to the application of contact and environment theory to intergenerational shared sites/spaces.

My literature review revealed a persistent lack of theory guiding IGSS programming and evaluation and identified a continued need for better use of existing theoretical frameworks. As also stated in the literature review, this is perhaps surprising given that in excess of 15 theoretical approaches have been identified that can be effectively applied to intergenerational programme development and research (Kuehne, 2003a & 2003b). To date, where theory has been used to underpin and evaluate intergenerational programme initiatives, this has mainly been based on human development theory (VanderVen, 2011; Kuehne, 2003a;). With this in mind, my study has added to the field by building upon the fundamental principles of traditional contact theory (Pettigrew, 1998; Allport, 1954), by combining it with elements of environmental gerontology and social ecology (Peace at al., 2006).

A number of intergenerational programmes (Jarrott, 2011; Statham, 2009; Jarrott and Bruno, 2007) have been based on the premise of contact theory: a theory which suggests that bringing young people and older adults together will promote interaction and facilitate positive attitudinal change between the generations. Some researchers in the field have begun to make use of contact theory as an

effective method for reducing prejudice or discrimination between age groups. However, one 'condition' that has not been included in the research or discussions to date, is the role of the environment in which such contact occurs. My study brings much needed attention to this area by observing how the environment, specifically the open spaces within the Centre, can both foster and/or inhibit interaction between the generations. For example, stakeholders placed great importance on the open space in the middle of the Centre for groups to participate in activities and attend meetings. During my observation, I noted the Centre's shared open space with a range, size and flexibility of additional connected spaces provided opportunities for interaction between the generations. For example, the central space in the Centre was found to be used in three main ways: as a means of passing through the space to reach another room; as a 'stop gap' for Centre users while they were waiting for an activity or service to begin or after one was finished; or for Centre users to attend an event. What is more, it has been stated that the development of intergenerational contact is not simply about the reduction of discrimination and attitudinal change (Fox and Giles, 1993). As a result, my study has contributed to theoretical developments in the IG field by considering how sustained intergenerational contact may also build sustainable positive relationships between the generations.

Many researchers have also warned that we cannot assume that mere contact between young people and older adults will result in positive results/benefits. With this in mind, instead of only researching the personal and developmental characteristics of individual members of an intergenerational dyad, my study has extended this perspective by exploring other dynamic(s) of this relationship further.

This has been accomplished by observing and demonstrating, for example, how factors such as – the environment, staff facilitation and age-appropriate activities may have contributed to the level and type of interaction between the generations.

As a result, these findings suggest that the combination of other theoretical perspectives such as environmental gerontology and contact theory can be applied to intergenerational practice and programming. What is more, my study highlights the fact that further thought needs to be given to the nature of contact, and reminds us that it is not sufficient to research quantity of contact alone. My study did not ‘measure’ contact between the generations but, by exploring the nature and type (quality) of interaction or contact, it highlighted some of the conditions (i.e. age-appropriate activities and environment) under which interaction between the generations may be fostered or inhibited within an IGSS.

The second theoretical area which was key to my study concerns the environment and people’s relationships within their environment. The literature has clearly demonstrated that one of the critical issues emerging within the intergenerational field is a lack of attention to the ways in which the built environment may influence intergenerational interaction. As stated in the literature review, the environmental context of ageing has also come to play an important role in gerontological theory and practice. My study has brought these areas together and shown how theory and concepts drawn from environmental gerontology can be applied to IP and, more specifically, to the development and evaluation of IGSSs. My study’s theoretical framework and findings emphasise how important it is to consider IG

relations as being located in 'place', and suggests that environmental perspectives have much to offer the study of intergenerational practice and shared sites.

Moreover, much research involving the role of the environment has primarily focused on interactions within micro, *age-segregated* environments (i.e. nursing/care homes, retirement communities). It is here that my study has added to the recognised growing need in the field to consider older adults' engagement with, and attachment to, *age-integrated* communities. More specifically, my study has added to the growing interest in understanding how people of all ages use public spaces and places and how best to design and develop intergenerational settings in which the physical environment can accommodate not only the physical and psychological needs of participants, but also effect positive interactions and relationships between the generations.

To sum up, if we seek to understand the meaning and significance behind intergenerational relationships as they develop in the context of a specific intergenerational setting, then I have argued that a theoretical approach is required which explores both the nature of the interaction between the different generations and considers the environmental factors that may influence such interactions. My theoretical approach – combining elements of contact theory and environmental gerontology – was one attempt to address this need and was based on the notion that the types of environment which the generations occupy form the context for potential interaction. More specifically, my study's theoretical framework and findings have demonstrated that the IG field must begin to focus on

interaction between person and environment, rather than exclusively on one or the other.

10.5 Conclusion

This study has sought to ‘tell the story’ of the development of the UK’s first purpose-built intergenerational centre and has explored in detail the origins of the Centre and some of the ways in which it has involved and engaged older adults and young people in the community it serves. My study has also outlined the policy and practice contexts against which the Centre was developed; reflected on relevant theoretical perspectives that have connected the environment, activity, and intergenerational relationships; and has critically reviewed what is currently a body of small-scale and largely anecdotal research evidence on the benefits and challenges of IGSSs.

My research has used a mixed-method qualitative research strategy that resonates with the aims of the study and I have explained my choice of an approach that combines a case study method with ethnography, documentary analysis and interviews. A theoretical approach – building on the fundamental principles of traditional contact theory and combining it with elements of environmental gerontology and social ecology – was chosen to enable me to explore both the nature of the interaction between the different generations, and consider the environmental factors that may influence such interactions. Analytically, I used Ritchie and Lewis’ (2003) concept of an analytic hierarchy to

frame and develop my emerging analyses and to help structure the presentation of my findings.

In this concluding chapter, I have then attempted to draw all these threads together to discuss: how the processes involved in the development of the Centre have had an impact on *who* is using the Centre and *how* they use the Centre; how the design of the Centre has influenced interaction between the generations; and how the provision of services and activities in the Centre was managed and communicated to (potential) users. Arising out of these discussions, I have made a number of recommendations both for the Centre itself, and for those who may be interested in developing similar initiatives themselves including other local councils and the wider community. I have also highlighted the limitations of my research and made a number of suggestions for possible future research and related theory in this field.

To conclude, this thesis has ‘shared’ a significant part of my life for the past four and a half years (six years if the time spent completing my Master's degree in Gerontology is included). Overall, I have appreciated the opportunities this experience has offered me, and thoroughly enjoyed conducting this research. This period of my life has also helped me develop as a researcher and, more personally, as an individual. During this time, I have been on both a personal and academic ‘journey’ that has helped me realise the importance of the meaningful intergenerational relationships I have nurtured over the years and will hopefully continue to build over my life course. As a result of this study, I have found myself reflecting on the significance of continuing to connect with people of all ages in my

community. Finally, it has reminded me of the passion I had when I first started working with older adults and pursued an education in the field of gerontology – to explore the origins of, and ways to address, the enduring issue of age discrimination in our society.

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Appendix 1 – Study timeline

0- 6 months: Existing literature and policy pertinent to my study was reviewed. Ethical considerations were assessed while spending time with BJJ/CIP in preparation for the main phase of fieldwork which included preparatory gathering of documentary information, unstructured observation of initial meetings with key stakeholders involved in the development of the Centre in London, as well as initial visits to the site which formed the beginning of a visual record of the construction of the Centre. A personal field diary was also started to begin to record my own feelings and reflections on the research process and my role within it.

6-12 months: Ethical approval and progression of my study were successful. Interview schedules were developed, piloted and revised. Training in the use of the Intergenerational Observation Scale was completed.

12-18 months: Recruited and conducted stakeholder interviews. Monitoring and observation tools drafted. Piloted observation tool and necessary amendments were made. Specific activities/services, spaces, and participants were selected for observation. Further training in qualitative data analysis was completed.

18-24 months: Observation schedule conducted. Fieldwork period at the Centre commences.

24-36 months: Analysis of data and beginning stages of writing up begun.

Appendix 2 – Topic Guide

Topic Guide – Interviews with key personnel

STUDY TITLE:

Promoting communication and fostering interaction between the generations: A study of the development and design of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre.

INTRODUCTION:

This study is interested in both 'telling the story' of the development and design of the Centre, and in exploring the ways in which it seeks to involve and engage older and younger adults in the area it will serve.

Crucial to this study is interviewing key stakeholders and personnel who have contributed to the establishment of the Centre. Today, I hope to discuss your expectations and proposed strategies for how the Centre will promote intergenerational work.

HOW MATERIAL WILL BE USED:

- The goal of this study is to determine whether the Centre's development and design promotes or impedes intergenerational interaction and engagement.
- Results will be fed back and inform the ongoing development of the Centre.
- Results from this study are intended to articulate key lessons learned for other local councils and the wider international community seeking to develop and design purpose-built intergenerational centres.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

- I will need to record this discussion in order to provide myself with a full account of everything that is said BUT everything that you say is kept confidential.

TURN ON DIGITAL RECORDER

The individual's role in the process:

1. For the record can you tell me what your official job/title is with Merton council?
2. Why was Merton interested in being the location for the UK's first IGC?
3. What has been your role in the development of the IGC?
 - How long have you been involved?
 - What were you doing before that?
 - Were involved in writing the bid/which bit(s)?
 - When exactly was the idea first conceived (and by whom) – or was it simply in response to the call?

Development of the Centre

1. Can you explain how the concept of having the UK's first purpose built IGC came about?
 - As a series of actions
 - Chronologically
2. Why do you think Merton was chosen?
 - What is unique about Merton?
3. What experience and/or visits to other sites (here or abroad) they drew on – or not – in developing the bid/concept.
4. How were local people consulted/involved in the bid and/or development of the concept?
5. What role(s) have the generations (older and younger adults) have had in this project?

Understanding of Intergenerational Practice/Relations

4. What does IP mean to you?

5. Is IP necessary?
 - Why/why not?
 - Why now?
6. What makes a good/effective IG relationship? **(Probe)**
7. How do you think that Merton's IGC will foster this? **(Probe)**

Understanding of the role the Centre (actual building/physical environment) plays in IP

8. How is Merton's IGC different than other local community centres? Day Centre? Children's Centre? **(Probe)**
9. What makes it different from other sites that provide intergenerational activities? **(Probe)**
10. In what ways does the design of the actual building influence interactions between older and younger people'? **(Probe)**
 - What is it about the building?
 - How does it affect the 'relationships between older and younger people'?

An evaluation of the process

1. What do you think of the final design of the building - both its indoor and outdoor spaces/planned activities.
 - Are they pleased or not with it?
 - What corners have been cut; what's missing etc.
2. What has been the greatest achievement so far in developing the Centre?
3. What have been some of the challenges?
4. In this process, what has been the biggest surprise?
5. In this process, what have been some of the unanticipated problems?
6. How have these challenges/problems been dealt with/overcome?
 - Example

Summative questions: In the last few minutes I would like to talk about the future of the Centre.

7. If you could go back and change one thing in the process, what would it be?
 - Why?
8. Now thinking about the future of the centre: what do you think it will be like in 5 yrs time?
9. Any advice for others who want to embark on such a project/build?

Turn off the recorder

- Thank you for your time and contributions
- Stress how helpful the discussion has been and reiterate what their input has provided -- results from this study are intended to articulate key lessons learned for other local councils and the wider international community seeking to develop and design purpose-built intergenerational centres.
- Reaffirm confidentiality

Appendix 3 – Information sheet

Study Title: Promoting communication and fostering interaction between the generations: A study of the development and design of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre.

Research Information Sheet

The London Borough of Merton is home to the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre which is due to open in 2010. This study gives individuals involved in the development of the Centre, and those who use it and work there, the opportunity to participate in 'telling the story' of this unique development.

Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why this study is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read this leaflet carefully and ask if there is anything that is unclear or that you would like more information about.

Why have I been chosen?

This study is interested in both 'telling the story' of the development and design of the Centre, and in exploring the ways in which it seeks to involve and engage older and younger adults in the area it will serve. Crucial to this study is interviewing key stakeholders and personnel who have contributed to the establishment of the Centre - to discuss with these individuals their expectations and proposed strategies for how the Centre will promote intergenerational work.

What will happen if I take part?

If you agree to take part, I will contact you to arrange an interview, which will be both digitally recorded and transcribed, at a time that is convenient for you. This should take approximately one hour to complete and you can choose to do this at your place of business or another suitable location. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make it easier for you to take part in the study.

Do I have to take part?

NO. Taking part is entirely voluntary, you are free to decide if you wish to take part or not. If you prefer not to take part, you do not need to give a reason. If you decide to take part but later change your mind, you will be able to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.

What do I have to do?

I will be contacting you shortly to find out if you are interested in taking part. If you agree, I will arrange to visit you at a convenient time to complete the interview. In the mean time, if you would like to know more about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me directly using the contact details below.

Who is organising the research?

This study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and builds on longstanding links between the Beth Johnson Foundation (BJF) and Keele University's Centre for Social Gerontology (CSG). It is being undertaken by Julie Melville, a PhD student, under the supervision of Professor Miriam Bernard and Dr. Jane Boylan of the University's Research Institute of Life Course Studies, and Mr. Alan Hatton-Yeo, Director of the Beth Johnson Foundation.

Any questions, please contact the principal researcher:

Julie Melville (Telephone: 07503 326117)

Centre for Social Gerontology, Research Institute for Life Course Studies

Keele University

Email: j.melville@ilcs.keele.ac.uk



Appendix 4 – Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Promoting communication and fostering interaction between the generations: A study of the development and design of the UK's first purpose-built intergenerational centre.

Please sign this form to give me permission to use information you give during this interview.

- 1 I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study.
- 2 I have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 3 I understand that participation is voluntary and that I am free to refuse to answer a question or withdraw at any time, without reason.
- 4 I understand that results of this interview may be included in reports, but these results will be anonymised before it is submitted for publication.
- 5 I agree to take part in this study.

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature

Any questions, please contact the principal researcher:

Julie Melville (Telephone: 07503 326117)

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K E E L E
UNIVERSITY

Appendix 5 – Example of Interview Transcription

010

Speaker key

IV Interviewer

IE Interviewee

IV Um, all right, so, for the record, can you tell me what you're job title is with Merton?

IE Yes, I am the Deputy Service Manager and year's [?] lead function for Children's Centres and Intergenerational Services.

IV Okay, that's a mouthful.

IE It is.

IV Right.

IE I break it down depending on which part it's relevant to.

IV Yes, who you're talking to.

IE Yes.

IV Well, that's okay. Um, have you been involved in any other intergenerational projects before this centre was developed?

IE Not specifically, not that they're stated as intergenerational projects; um, I've dipped in and out of things that have an intergenerational focus to it but nothing that is, ah, an environment that's purposeful for it.

IV Right, okay, was that within the Merton Council or outside in other jobs or...?

IE Um, well, I've, sort of, done a back to front journey. So, I started in elderly services and I've ended up in under fives. So, along that career span, um, there's been opportunities where, especially when you're working with an elderly market, you get far more involved with the extended family on that. That was [unclear] private sector only [unclear].

IV That's interesting. Hm, you're the only that I've interviewed but they've gone the other way, yes.

IE Oh, really? Yes, it wasn't planned.

IV Right, okay. We'll chat after about that. Um, how would you define your role within the development of this centre? What has been your, sort of, key role in all that so far?

IE I think because the, the... where we started this journey was very much around collocating a Children's Centre within the intergenerational building. So, because I lead on Children's Centres it's meant that I've had to be involved on, on several levels because, ultimately, you needed to make sure that the funding requirements for the Sure Start programme were embodied within, ah, decisions that were made for the building. And then to look very much around how you could adapt the Sure Start model to be intergenerational. So, that's where I've, I've been involved.

IV And how long have been involved in this development so far?

IE Probably since I came into the post, which was just over a year ago.

IV Okay, so, then you weren't involved in the initial bid process and so on?

IE Only on the peripherals because I was part of the Children's Centre team and I did a lot of the business management at that point, so periphery involvement but not, not a lot.

IV Okay, so, you weren't involved in the actual writing up of the bid or...?

IE No.

IV Okay, okay, I'm just trying to get an idea of who actually was involved in that and if they're still a part of this alliance, so...

IE I think (X - ex Head of Service) who at that point was involved but she left about the time that I came into the post. Um, but she would've been part of the bid writing team.

IV Right, okay, okay, let's shift now a bit to what, what an Intergenerational Centre is. So, in your opinion, how would you... what do you see an Intergenerational Centre looking like? Or how would you define it?

IE I would like to define it as a seamless environment that's actually got representation from all ages but that you're... without looking like you're engineering a situation, that you've actually got people from over 50s, under 25s, that actually enjoy being with each other and that mutual learning comes almost by osmosis than by a planned approach to it. And I think we've got a building that will allow us to do that.

IV Okay, well, we'll come back to talk about the design and stuff after, then. Um, obviously, this is just your opinion, but why do you think Merton was interested in being the home of the first purpose-built Intergenerational Centre?

IE I think that, as a small borough, you've got an opportunity to... to develop a new initiative easier than you are if you're a big borough. We've also got the benefits of the Merton Compact so I think we're one of the authorities that are doing extremely well with our [unclear] departments. And actually you need that buy-in from your whole borough community to actually make something like this work. If you haven't got that then all it is is a local authority model, which doesn't work.

IV Right, what, what is the... I don't know the Merton Compact.

IE The Merton Compact is a set of principles that guide how a statutory organisation will engage with and work with, um, the third sector, so the voluntary sector and non-statutory services.

IV Oh, okay, okay, because I've just never heard of that.

IE Oh, okay, I'm surprised... I'm surprised someone didn't mention it because it's some of the keys are very involved in it.

IV Yes, I've never heard of it.

IE Okay.

IV I think you get so ingrained sometimes in something you actually don't really think to tell other people.

IE Yes.

IV It's the first time I've heard it so I've got to ask what that means.

IE Ah, okay.

IV Um, on the flipside of that why do you think... obviously there's a number of boroughs that bid for it and shortlisted and so on. Why do you think Merton was the one that was chosen? What do you think was unique about the bid or Merton, in general?

IE I think that the fact that the LDA knew of, of Merton and the work that we were doing, especially in relation to whether the [unclear] the new services, was an attraction. It's also attractive to an organisation such as the LDA to work with a smaller borough, I believe, because it's actually... you haven't got so many layers to go through to actually get an achievement of, of what you need.

I think the bid was quite innovative, as well. It spoke very much around that collocation of services and benefits to the local community. The fact that it is in a very heavily deprived community would've helped, as well.

IV Yes, okay, um, the next one is about examples of best practice. So, obviously, the development of this centre, not a huge amount of information about how to develop such a site.

IE Mm.

IV So, what examples, if any, were drawn upon, that you know of, um, as examples of best practice or pieces of research that were used to try to help, sort of...?

IE In terms of the actual building?

IV Yes, or the development of services; whatever you, sort of, see as...

IE Because there's been so many people involved I think that's quite difficult to answer. In terms of best practice and the building, I think the fact that (X – capital build manager) has been heavily involved in developing a number of different models has actually helped. I think she had a, a greater understanding of what the end user would want than just somebody that's in, in a design team. Um, I would like to think in terms of the services that we're going to develop we've got people from a range of different backgrounds with different levels of understanding that are actually coming together to say, well, let's try this or what about... we'll do this but we'll, we'll tweak it to make it intergenerational.

There aren't that many examples of a purpose-built environment that you could then develop the services. Now, that's both a blessing and a curse because, actually, from the beneficial side of that it means that you've got no template to follow. You can, instinctively, build some services that actually may or may not work but nobody's going to say, you're not doing that right. What they're going to say is, okay, we've tried that; let's review it and let's do something else. Um, the curse of that is that you can't pinch other people's ideas and [unclear], but, yes.

IV Yes, so, a lack of... right, I think, yes, I'm trying to get to the heart of that and see if there are examples available and how would you actually draw on them if they were there and how accessible are they?

IE I think... yes, I think there are good examples. Even if you take an environment such as St Mark's Family Centre, which is not that far away from here, it's a traditional community-based resource that is about serving all members of the community. It's not an Intergenerational Centre but it has some examples of really good practice as to how you could have a [unclear] group running almost seamlessly into a luncheon club with both people in the environment at the same time and actually that interaction and how that works. I don't think intergenerational work has got the right level of focus at the moment to actually be able to say, hand on heart, I could go to any number of sites and pick out some examples of good practice. What would be really good is if, um, and I was mentioning it to a colleague up at, um, at Johnson [?] when they were doing some work and that's very much around what they're trying to develop is, is, is having a central resource that you could use, um...

IV Yes, absolutely, so, hopefully, out of this comes something.

IE Comes something, yes.

IV So, to answer my question.

IE Yes.

IV Yes, right, okay, um, obviously, this is now on your opinion and your involvement in the Programme Board and so on, but what roles have the generations been able to play in the development of the centre so far, um, over the last year and a half or so?

IE I would say that I know the model hasn't been perfect. From the involvement that I've had I would say it was too laden with people that are paid to do a job, rather than people from the real community actually having an input. So, there's been an indirect input. I know (X – project manager) has been engaging with the Seniors' Forum. Equally, (X – IGC manager) has done some work with the local schools and spoken to, to the, sort of, school councils. But, I think, actually in terms of that, that Project Board and the Reference Group, what you didn't see there were what I would call real people. You've got more of the people that are paid to do a job.

IV Yes, I understand. So, why do you think that is? Or how, how do we change that so that those people are involved? Is there some [overtalking]?

IE I think I would've preferred to see the Intergenerational Forum set up alongside the Reference Group, the Programme Board and the Project Board just so that you actually had that as a process that was developing all the way along, rather than having to construct something that each time you wanted to seek a... seek some information from the community about what you were doing, you'd then got to set something up. I think it will make it harder now that what we're saying is, here's your building; now do you want some more involvement? And I, I don't think you get the same level of buy-in that way. I think if you'd have set it up much earlier then people would've felt that it was more their building.

IV Okay, ah, this is probably a similar question, then, but what about the involvement of local community? And I think I'm, I'm referring now to, sort of, the area around here. Have you been able to engage with them?

IE Since (X's – IGC manager) been in place, (X – IGC manager) has done a lot of, um, ground work in terms of engagement with... and certainly with the two adjacent schools, she's spoken very much to the senior citizens that go to Colinside [?]. She's spoken to people at St Mark's. So, she's spoken to people in the environments that they already access. And I think that that's part of, of where we're going with it, rather than, ah, the finished product. I just can't see much of a trail of that having happened before. It may well have done and I wouldn't say it didn't happen but I can't see the hard evidence to that.

IV So, it's more since the Manager of the Centre's been here in post, on site, sort of thing.

IE Yes, I think that's, that's, you know, a different engagement.

IV Yes, yes, yes, okay, um, the next one is a bit more about understanding intergenerational practices and approaches in general, not specifically about the building at the moment.

IE Mm.

IV What does the term, sort of, intergenerational practice mean to you, in general, as an approach? How would you see that?

IE I see intergenerational practice as going back to creating communities as they used to be; to, in my grandparents' time, you didn't need an intergenerational approach because, actually, that is what community did. It was again older people in the community were very much the role models for the younger people in the community. Everybody felt an ownership of other people's children. And that's what we haven't got now.

We've got fragmented communities that actually people close their front door and that's it. And, you know, gone are the days when you could leave your back door open and people could just pop in and borrow a cup of sugar or whatever. Um, so, to actually... I mean, the fundamental part of an intergenerational approach, to me, is actually to not have the problems with community cohesion that we've got now. And it is about having that one community that thinks as one.

IE Mm-hm, okay, ah, and this one is a bit more about the policy agenda. I mean, obviously, intergenerational practice has been around for a long time. But why do you think it's become a more important factor on the policy agenda now, um, in local authorities when really not much attention has been paid in the past X amount of years? What do you think the shift is about?

IE I think the shift is actually about money. Um, as far as I can see there is a complete drive towards stop having silos as services and actually an intergenerational approach is an umbrella over a number of different services within a local authority. And actually, by definition, if you collapse services into one another it has a cost savings. And I actually think that's why it's receiving a greater focus because it allows local authorities to stop working how they used to and adopt some different ways of working.

I don't think that's a bad thing, you know. I think, in terms of where we move forward, why would you have an entirely independent children's service, adult service, community service, when actually there's, there's aspects of work that should be part about the [unclear] rather than age-related.

IV Yes, okay, um, and this is just in your opinion again: what would you say makes an effective or a good intergenerational relationship?

IE Open communication has to be the key to that but also a willingness to, to understand where the other person is coming from. And that's... that will be some of the work that we do here is very much around removing those barriers; actually saying, we're all people, irrespective of how old we are. We seem to have lost the knack of talking to each other.

IV Mm, that, that is my next question, actually. So, you've just answered it. It's, sort of, how does... how will this Centre foster that relationship? And you might've just answered. I don't know if there's anything else you want to add?

IE I mean, I... I think the, the open day was quite a good example. We had a group of young people, probably between 11 and 14, that actually weren't your typical, or what you perceive to be your typical, young person, who stands in a corner and scowls at the older people that are around them. They were really willing to be in the environment and to engage with what was going on there. And I actually think if we can replicate that with them to actually say, this is a welcoming environment, the older people that you will encounter here are friends, not foe and actually people seeking to come here because they know they're going to get support, knowledge, understanding from people that are from a different generation to them. And it's... it's overcoming that and making sure that, you know, people seek to come here because they know they're going to find those people rather than avoiding coming here because they don't want to meet them.

IV Yes, okay, the next questions are, sort of, there's an argument to be had that there's something about the environment and the built environment that... that fosters interaction. Obviously, this is a purpose-built centre, so is there something about the design which you, sort of, alluded to earlier? Um, so, I mean, as a general question, to, sort of, start with, what do you think about the final build? And, I mean, the building, itself, and the outside spaces are you...?

IE Um, having just seen what they've done to the garden area, I would say that I'm not happy with that at all; that is not what I expected it to be. Um, the inside spaces: I love the social space. I think the social space is perfect to promote intergenerational communication [unclear]. I think the fact that we've got lots of little rooms could give rise to almost a fragmentation of the building, so that you've got the day care over one side and you've got the, the largest room on the opposite side. So, I'd be going to say that, actually, this side of the building is for younger people and this side of the building is for older people.

And I, I think that rooms always create barriers, whichever way you look at it. And you can't have a building with no walls. I'm not advocating that. But I think what you need is... Kim's going to have her work cut out to make it clear that all spaces are accessible by all people and that we're very careful that we set up all of our services around an age-defined process. And I think that is... that is going to be some of the difficulty of this building. Unless we really promote the use of that

social space then, ah, it's where the traffic moves. It's almost like a school corridor where the only point that all pupils in the school actually converge is when they all come out of their individual classrooms and they go along a, like, a central corridor. And I think that is what we need to use that social space for and make it very carefully contrived as to making people then: I'll... I'll just sit here for a minute and I can do this. And you should then see the, the intergenerational mix in that area.

IV Yes, so you think that will happen more in the centre space than...

IE I think so.

IV In any other rooms.

IE Mm.

IV So, I mean, in your... if you could go back and change something about the design what would you have changed about? In an ideal world, I should say, with more money or [overtalking] because obviously you're constricted, but...

IE Um, I think I might... I probably would've had more of the glass type walls so that you can actually see what's happening without having to be part of it, if... you can get the, the little glass bricks so, so you get that, sort of, illusion of what's going on beyond that you might want to go and see. I just think we... we've ended up with too many fixed walls that you can't see what's going on beyond. But apart from that I think the, the building is a good compromise for some of the challenges that we had along the way.

IV Mm-hm, the challenges being?

IE Money.

IV Yes, fine, yes.

IE Yes.

IV Okay, and what were you saying about the outside... I mean, um, something that happened with the outside space that you weren't anticipating or...?

IE Um, yes, I, I just didn't expect a formal garden. What I expected was more a... what we've now got is a very hard, asphalt [?] path, whereas what I'd envisaged is more of a centrally, natural type of garden that you would have and hard path that you would be made of natural products. I just think at the moment it looks like you're going out for a nice afternoon tea at somewhere like Morden Hall Park. I don't know if you've been there. But it's... it's very formalising. You almost need the, the standard roses to line the path. It wasn't what I was expecting. But that can be changed. It's not...

IV Nothing, yes, that can't be altered.

IE Yes, I just think when you've got an organisation such as Groundworks that are going to develop that space and actually that is probably as far removed from anything that they would've wanted that it could be. This is why I said to (X – IGC manager), have they actually seen it yet?

IV Yes, and...?

IE No, they haven't.

IV No, oh-oh, so, you wait and see now.

IE Mm.

IV Um, you've answered my next question already, actually, but is there anything else that you think the design of the building, inside or outside, will influence interaction. I mean, I know you've already said about how it might be impeded and that the centre of the building might... you didn't want to influence it but is there anything else that you want to add because I...?

IE I don't think so. I think it's very difficult with a new building because actually you need to live in a building before you work out its constraints and its successes. Because, ultimately, it's less of a shell than it was but I could say, well, actually, I don't like this, this and this. And (X – IGC manager) and I have said several conversations about the fob [unclear] entrance to the buggy store, which... at the end of the day that is a barrier to people coming in. Actually, why I want to have to go into a centre to get them to open a gate so that I can put my buggy in the store and then come back into the building to use the services? It... it's discouraging. And I think it's... it's

things like that that are about the functionality on a day to day basis of a building that designers often get wrong.

IV Yes, so, perhaps I ought to come back and chat with you in a year, or something, about certain things.

IE Yes, I mean, there's... there's certain thing that we already know. I mean, (X – IGC manager) and I know that the, the garden kitchen is our biggest frustration. Yes, it's been designed so that people with a disability, predominantly in a wheelchair, could use that kitchen. But, actually, what you're then saying is that they can use the kitchen but they can't cook in an oven because we haven't got an oven because we've got a rise and fall hob. That is not sensible. You know, it's... it has to be inclusive on a level that people with a disability see it as a functioning kitchen. So, you know, it's... it's things like that that have been designed with a particular purpose but not with the end user in mind and then expensive to put right.

IV Yes, yes [unclear], right, well, maybe I'll come back. And then, obviously, there's certain things where there are so many lessons to be learnt. But part way through, when you start using the facility, perhaps I'll [unclear] to come back and chat with a few of you.

IE Mm.

IV And add that in.

IE Yes.

IV Because obviously it's important to incorporate that [overtalking].

IE Yes, I think that there are some things in the design of the building that will be changed and evolved as we go along because they'll have to.

IV Yes, okay, um, the next ones are a comparison, actually. And I think you, you talked a bit about it. But there's, you know, in defining an Intergenerational Centre what is it? And part of it is looking at how is it different. So, thinking about a Children's Centre that you know of, obviously you're going to know many, how would you envisage in Intergenerational Centre, like this one, being different from a Children's Centre? What is it that makes it different [overtalking]?

IE I actually will turn that question round. What we've learnt from Children's Centres is that often they are intergenerational environments. And it's about bringing that learning from a Children's Centre into this environment. I mean, the, the Children's Centres that we run, you've got a lot of extended, informal childcare that goes on now.

So, a number of the people that come are grandparents with caring responsibilities. You've got teenage parents. So, it's about saying, what are the good lessons to learn that are restrictive in a Children's Centre environment that you can broaden out here? Um, such as, if, if we look at, ah, we run, um, a peers... breastfeeding peers support group, so parents that have previously breastfed are actually then trained to support new mums.

And, I think, if you broaden that out into: have you got older people that are now on the next generation of children, caring for their grandchildren, that would also be well placed to, to provide that, that sort of nurturing and maturity of support? And I think they're some of them thing that, that we would want to embrace here

IV Okay, okay, um, the next one then is comparing [unclear] into a Community Centre.

IE Mm-hm.

IV So, what do you see as a difference or similarity between those, those two environments?

IE I think Community Centres have been constructed very much around the separation of generations, rather than integration of them. Um, I think that's more about... Community Centres tend to be other people coming in and delivering a service in that environment. So, you will also have the, the older person's luncheon club will be between 12 and two. The play group runs between nine and 11. So, you... you've put those, those contrived barriers between the generations on the basis that, well, older people might fall over the young children and the young children might get hurt and the older person might get hurt; let's make sure that we've got time to, to change the environment around between the two groups.

Um, and I think some Community Centres are moving away from that and are looking very much more around and intergenerational function. But there is still this: we don't want, particularly, teenagers mixing with older people because ultimately those two generations, traditionally, have very opposing ways of doing things. And the dialogue is sometimes not positive. So, I think that's what we don't want to have here. Whilst we will have other organisations coming in, everybody's got to be able demonstrate the intergenerational focus that they will have as part of that group.

IV Yes, okay, um, the next bit is a bit more reflective now. So, thinking on it so far...

IE Mm-hm.

IV Um, what do you think the greatest achievement has been so far in the development of the centre?

IE To actually get it built, I think.

IV The economy [?].

IE Yes, um, I also think that... we're back to the open day and I think the fact that we had so many people coming in through the centre that actually wanted... that, that we'd piqued there interest. So, they'd wanted to come in and see what was beyond the doors. I, I still think it's too early on to say what are the successes. I think that getting the building built is a success; getting the right manager in the post is an equal footing with that, um, because the wrong person in this centre would've been catastrophic. But I'm almost looking forward to say, in a year's time, how can we reflect back and see what have we achieved and what have we still got to achieve?

IV Yes, okay, um, this is a flip now on it. What have been some of the challenges or unanticipated problems so far in the development? Talk for an hour now, probably, about it.

IE The biggest challenge for us and it's only from a, a personal point of view, is that there have been far too many people involved. So, if, if we look at things like the day to day problems we're going to have with the building because of the design flaw, some of that is inherent with the architects having licence to speak to a number of different people. So, the architects would've spoken to (X – Project manager); they would've spoken to (X – capital build manager); they would've spoken to me. Whereas in a normal project of this level you'd have a capital built team and every question gets funnelled through them. So, (X's – capital build manager) team should've had a very strong lead in that programme. And, ah, any of the questions that needed answering by the broader Project Board should've been fed through (X – Project manager). Anything that was about the day to day delivery should've been fed through to, to my team.

The, the problem that you've got is that (X – Project manager) was given authority, or assumed authority, to answer some of those questions. Bisi's team then got very agitated about that. We're getting frustrated, as the end user, that, well, that won't work because they made that decision. And I think it's... that has been difficult. And if, in an ideal world with the benefit of hindsight you would go back and make sure that not only were the project protocols in place, but actually the clear steer about who had responsibility to lead that process should've been put in place. Um, it's also very difficult to have a Project Manager who isn't going to be part of the end use team. Because that's been difficult for (X – Project manager) because he's... he's nursed this all the way along and then we come along and say, well, actually, you've got no purpose in this, go

away, politely. But, you know, I think that's... I wouldn't have liked it if I was in his position, so I can understand where he's at with that. But there have been lots of challenges around communications.

IV Within, sort of, the Programme Board or within the...?

IE No, within the interaction between those boards the, the broader aspect of the day to day job. So, it's been set up as a proper, managed project, but then the day to day stuff's got very muddled or in the way.

IV How would you change that if you could, then? What would be, sort of, a lesson learned from that to someone else that was trying to do that?

IE I would've been clearer in the project brief about the roles and responsibilities of the capital build team and the end users and have made sure that those lines of communications weren't misinterpreted, weren't manipulated and were very clear.

IV Okay, that's good. That's [unclear]. Okay, um, the last few questions are just about the future, really, of the centre. So, a two, two part question: the first one is from one year from now, obviously with the opening...

IE Mm-hm.

IV What would like to see here at the centre?

IE No empty spaces and what I'd like to see is, is a really strong, local advisory board that actually is representative of an intergenerational mix of people and heavily dependent on the local community to drive those decisions.

At the end of the day we're only here to deliver on two levels. One is what the local community wants and the other is what the LDA requirements are and whatever we then decide for Merton are the priorities. And, I think, we... we will always need to ensure that the community have a resource that they value and they want to be involved in. Because if you haven't got that level of commitment what you've got is a building that is led by a local authority, delivering things that the local authority want to deliver for the community. And that is the wrong thing.

IV Yes, okay, um, thinking a bit further on now, so five years from now, what would you like to see the centre looking like or to have achieved in that timeframe?

IE I would like to see it leading some of the intergenerational work that is recognised nationally, that is very much around having an environment where people aren't afraid to take risks, that they are willing to try new approaches, perhaps learning some of the lessons that, that, nationally, other people have learnt, but actually, really saying, what is it that we can do that is different? And actually then having that national recognition. I would like to see this as a, a leading, um, Intergenerational Centre. I'd also like to see the building looking less new.

IV Yes, um, well used.

IE Well used, yes, I mean, that's the trouble with a building like this: that ultimately it'll only ever look like this once. And, you know, you need the scuffed floor and you need the, the hand marks on the walls because that's about the people wanting to use the, the resource. I do love it clean but...

IV Yes, it's a bit of a double-edged sword, isn't it?

IE Yes, it's a bit of a sterile environment when it's like that. It needs to be more [unclear].

IV Right, okay, last question: if you had to give advice to another organisation, another group of people that wanted to develop such a centre, what would it be?

IE Look at what you want to achieve as the end, rather than the journey. Where do you want to be? What do you want to make your centre represent? Not what do the funders want because you can build that into whatever you're doing. What do the community want and what is the buy-in from all of the key stakeholders? What are they bringing to it? One of the challenges that we know for sure we've got is the amount of revenue that comes into this building or the lack of revenue that comes into this building. And you can only do so much on goodwill. So, you need to be very clear who's buying into the concept, who's going to bring something to the table and how best can you work in partnership to, to maximise the delivery. I just think that our strategy's a little hazy in terms of where they want to be.

IV Yes, thank you.

IE Okay.

Appendix 6 – Observation Schedule

Date:	Time:	Where:	What:
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<p><u>WHO</u> Age Gender Ethnicity Disability Relationship(s) between users</p>	
<p><u>WHY</u> Reason for visiting IGC</p> <p><u>HOW</u> How is space used Patterns/directions of movement How furniture is used (map points of interest)</p>	

BEHAVIOUR

Individual behaviour

Interactions with:

- staff
- own age group
- other age group(s)

*Verbal/Nonverbal
behaviour*

Intergenerational?

Positive/Negative Affect

General Notes

APPENDIX-7

Acacia Intergenerational Centre December 2010 - January 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Childminder Drop-in A group for childminders to meet and share ideas. If you would like to meet a local childminder please call to arrange an appointment: 020 8274 5121 Term time only 9.30am – 11.30am</p> <p>SPECIAL EVENTS See our separate monthly AS leaflet with details of special events for the month.</p> 	<p>Job Club Drop-in for advice and support about work, benefits and training 10.00am – 3.00pm</p> <p>Stop Smoking Drop-in Support and advice about stopping smoking. Everyone is welcome 10.00am – 2.00pm</p> <p>Carers and former Carers Drop-in. Speak to South Thames Cross Roads about caring for carers. First Tuesday of the month. Starting 7 December 10.30am – 12.00pm</p> <p>Safer Neighbourhoods Drop-in for support and advice from your local team. 7 December and 4 January 11.00am – 1.00pm</p> <p>Breastfeeding and Play Group Drop-in for support, guidance and information about breastfeeding whilst playing and interacting with your child or children. 11.30am – 1.30pm</p>	<p>Child Health Clinic Drop-in with your child under 5 to see a health visitor 9.30am – 11.00am</p> <p>Family and Friends Play Session Drop-in for children under 5 with their family and friends of all ages. Enjoy stories and songs at the end! 9.30am – 11.30am</p> <p>Coffee Morning Drop in for a tea and a chat. Get out the knitting needles, scrabble or chessboards too! Everyone is welcome. 10.00am – 12.00pm</p> <p>Supporting Separating Families Drop-in Advice and support if you or your family are affected by separation. 10.00am – 12.00pm</p>	<p>For information, to book a place or meet the team please visit the centre, call 020 8274 5121 or go to www.merton.gov.uk/igs</p>  <p>ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND! Our fantastic adventure playground is open to 8-16 year olds at the following times: Tuesday to Friday 3.30pm – 6.30pm Saturday 12.30pm – 6.30pm</p>	<p>Incredible Years 12-week course to help parents learn new and different ways to help your 3-6 year olds feel good about themselves, develop friendships, enjoy and achieve in school and improve behaviour. Starts 14 January 2011 Bookings essential 9.30am – 12.30pm</p> <p>Bowen Technique Qualified volunteer practitioner uses thumbs or fingers to make a series of precise, rolling type movements over muscles to treat pain from injury, illness, stress or fatigue. Call 020 8274 5121 to book your place. 11.00am – 2.00pm</p> <p>Dance Exercise An hour of dance exercise to music. Everyone is welcome 11.00am – 12.00pm</p>

Our afternoon and evening activities are on the back of the timetable

Acacia Intergenerational Centre
230 Grove Road, Mitcham Eastfields, CR4 1SD
020 8274 5121
www.merton.gov.uk/igs
www.merton.gov.uk/childtranscentres

Acacia closes on Friday 24 December at 12.30pm
and opens on Tuesday 4 January at 9.00am



Acacia Intergenerational Centre

December 2010 - January 2011

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Family and Friends Play Session Drop-in for children under 5 with their family and friends of all ages. Enjoy stories and songs at the end! 1.00pm – 3.00pm</p> <p>Gardening Club Helpful hints for the garden discover secret bugs, craft activities, learn what makes things grow, help harvest and eat our crops... and more! Everyone is welcome. 3.30pm – 5.00pm</p> <p>A visit from the Kidstop Bus A charity shop on wheels! Great quality items for affordable prices. 13 December and 10 January 2.00pm – 4.30pm</p> <p>Movie Mondays Watch a film, enjoy homemade popcorn and have a chat afterwards. Children under 12 must be accompanied by a responsible adult. 50p entry Starts 11 October 2010 6.00pm – 8.30pm</p> <p>Yoga 8-week yoga course. Call 020 8274 5121 to enquire. 7.15pm – 8.15pm</p>	<p>Fun for all Drop-in to participate in various activities from board games to arts and crafts. Everyone is welcome. Activities most suitable for those aged 3+ 3.30pm – 5.00pm</p> <p>Dance Exercise An hour of dance exercise to music. Everyone is welcome 6.00pm – 7.00pm</p> 	<p>Active Play Drop-in session for children under 5 with their family and friends of all ages to join in active play. 3.30pm – 5pm</p> <p>Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities. 12-week course to increase parent's confidence and self-esteem to achieve positive outcomes for their family. Bookings essential. 6.00pm – 9.00pm</p> <p>For information, to book a place or meet the team please visit the centre call 020 8274 5121 or go to www.tnorton.gov.uk/igc</p> 	<p>Time of our Lives 6-week intergenerational history project. Share your stories, compare similarities and differences between the generations and meet new people. Register your interest. 3.30pm – 4.30pm</p> <p>Bowen Technique Qualified, volunteer practitioner uses thumbs or fingers to make a series of precise, rolling type movements over muscles to treat pain from injury, illness, stress or fatigue. Book your free one hour session on 020 8274 5121. 4.45pm – 7.45pm</p> <p>Ballroom and Latin dancing Join in a mixture of Ballroom and Latin dancing. Everyone is welcome and no experience or partner necessary! 6.30pm – 7.30pm</p> <p>SPECIAL EVENTS See our separate monthly A5 leaflet with details of special events for the month.</p>	<p>Fish and Chip Friday First Friday of each month. Enjoy over-baked fish and chips, meet new friends and participate in an activity afterwards. £2 per person. Booking essential 12.30pm – 2.30pm</p>  <p>Quick Cook 3-week intergenerational cooking course to learn how to make quick, tasty, healthy meals and enjoy eating them together. Minimum age 5 years, no maximum. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, maximum two children per adult. £3 per person. Bookings essential. 4.00pm – 5.30pm</p>

Afternoon

Our morning activities are on the front of this timetable

Appendix 8 – Position Paper

Position paper and protocols

CASE studentship for research study of Merton Intergenerational Centre

Background

Following Merton's successful bid to the London Development Agency for capital funding to develop the first purpose built intergenerational centre in the UK, the Beth Johnson Foundation, in partnership with the University of Keele, made a successful bid to the ESRC for a CASE studentship. The studentship is for a three year PhD commencing October 1st 2008 to undertake a research study of the development and implementation of the new centre and to assess its impact on intergenerational relationships and programmes. The study is mainly funded by the ESRC with part funding from the Beth Johnson Foundation.

Protocols

As a research study it is important to protect the independence of the researcher and to ensure that they do not 'interfere with or shape' the project's development by providing opinions, comments or observations that alter people's plans or intentions. The research study is not a piece of action research but an external review of the learning from, and impact of, the centre. Moreover, the researcher is not part of the development team but instead sits to one side of the project seeking to understand and evaluate the processes taking place and to measure and describe their impact. It is important that these distinctions are made clear in order for the research to remain valid and academically rigorous.

Understandably, confusion can arise sometimes when working with an independent researcher. Consequently, in working with partners the following protocols must apply:

1. The researcher cannot give an opinion or advice on how the project is, or could be, being developed.
2. The researcher is able to advise on the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, indicators and what quantitative and qualitative information could be collected.
3. The researcher will abide by the University of Keele ethical codes in all aspects of their role

In support of the researcher the project team shall have the following responsibilities:

1. To ensure all relevant information and data is passed to the researcher as required.
2. To meet with the researcher on a regular basis
3. To ensure the researcher is given full opportunity to attend and observe project meetings and events.

Appendix 9 – Conceptual Framework and Index

1. Development of the IGC

A. Context

Background to the project (*why LBM was interested & chosen*)

- Policy drivers (community cohesion, social inclusion agenda)
- Recognition/high profile
- Deliver/enhance CC agenda and CC core offer
- Solve social problems (ie family breakdown, unemployment, fear of crime)
- Available funding/resources
- O.P. seen as a valuable resource (demographics)
- Different way of working/thinking (joining services)
- Improve outcomes for LBM citizens
- Delivered good bid/presentation
- Have capacity to deliver (working partnerships with Vol sector)
- Regenerate deprived area (don't attract £)
- Site and location of IGC

Staff/Stakeholders experience and expertise

- Interest in the project
- Time commitment
- Previous experience in delivering IP
- Professional background (current and previous)

Funding

- Sustainability of the IGC (capital build vs revenue stream)
- Source of funding (DCSF – LA & LDA)

Vision for the IGC (*what it will do/achieve*)

- Open and being used by all ages
- Full programme of IG activities
- Centre for excellence, nationally recognised

- Hub/spoke model (catalyst for further IP work further afield)
- CC & IGC or IGC (co-location)
- Community ownership
- Sustainable
- Provide comfortable environment and welcoming/inviting space for people to be around and see others
- Enhance/provide opportunities for CC's core offer
- Supporting children and families (through childcare/employment)

Strategy for the IGC (*how it will be delivered/achieved*)

- Unclear/no strategy
- Remodel/brand existing services as 'IG'
- Specialist staff/training
- Themes (activities/services) focus on children, schools, family
- Outcomes
- Ownership/running of IGC (LA or Voluntary sector)
- Activities and services will foster IG relationships
- Evolving process

B. Project Management

Management/delivery of the project

- Primary focus on the physical building (and now service delivery)
- Leadership
- Communication
- Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders involved
- Timeframe

Stakeholder reflections on the process (*achievements, challenges and advice*)

- Importance of delivering the building/appointing manager
- Engagement of generations (end users)
- Strategy & Outcomes
- Funding and sustainability of IGC
- Project management
- Concerns
- Community involvement/buy in from the outset
- Understanding and expertise in IP

- Time
- Importance of partnerships (Vol sector and not LA led)

Utilisation of ex's of best practice and research

- Limited, not needed, not many to draw on
- Unknown (didn't know, don't need to know, incorrect info)
- Stakeholder's and LA's previous experience (children)
- Spoke with other LA's, professionals/experts in the field
- Community centre and children centre design aspects

User Involvement in process (*development, design and delivery*)

- Representation from LA (project boards, IG champion, Ward councillors)
- Representation from professional contacts (LDA steering committee, vol sector, schools)
- Challenges to engage older people (and youth)
- Timing/when to involve
- Unknown - don't know, incorrect info
- Limited - not much, not needed,
- Tokenism (naming of IGC, time capsule, consultation day)
- Presenting info to them in community spaces
- Reference group
- When to involve users - needed now that the building is there
- Examples of future involvement (IG Forum)

C. Understanding of 'intergenerational approaches' to working across the generations

Understanding of IP (*defn, ex's*)

- Brings generations together for common purpose/outcome
- Mutual/individual benefit
- Exchange/transfer between generations (learning, skills, doing to/for)
- Ages (5 & 14)
- Relations (familial, non-familial)
- Factors shaping/Origins of own understanding (previous experience)
- Utilisation of ex's of best practice and research

- Unknown (don't need to know)
- Examples of IP given different to defn
- Going back to the way things were, creating old community, traditional
- Approach to deal with/solve problems with or between generations

Understanding(s) of what the IGC is (*is not*)

- Place/space where people can meet/see each other (ages in same place)
- Place/space where people can receive services, engage in activities
- Ages brought together for common purpose/working together
- Sharing of resources
- Importance of the actual physical building (activities, people who use it)
- Approach/philosophy/focus
- Hub/model for wider delivery of IP
- Ownership (who is it for – whole community, all ages)
- Comparison to other types of centres (community centres, children's centres)
- Bit that is added on

Comparison to other types of centres (community centres, children's centres)

- Visibility of other generations
- Inclusion/exclusion of different ages
- Atmosphere/Inviting
- Ownership/Identity with the centre
- No difference (fact, concern/risk)
- Promotion and facilitation of IG element
- Activities/Services (not segregated, wider reaching)
- Use of space (privately hired)
- Design of space (communal lobby, reception area, new/modern)
- Management and governance structures
- Compliment/enhance CC core offer

2. Design of the IGC

A. Perceived influence of Design

Design Features of the IGC/Perceptions of how space(s) will influence interaction

- Size, range of spaces (private/intimate and group meetings)
- Flexibility/Usability of spaces (multipurpose) – reasons for this
- Safeguarding/Health & Safety
- New/modern
- 2 separate facilities/entities
- Communal spaces (lobby and gardens) allow for free movement
- Time/funding influenced space & design (ie modular build)
- Omissions (IT space, kitchen)
- Noise levels
- Flow from inside/outside, rooms open on to lobby
- Open spaces (lobby) allow for people to come together /pass each other
- Multipurpose/flexible spaces influence ownership of the building
- Day to day use/functionality not thought through
- Unsure (too early to tell, don't know)
- They do not (activities, users and management of them)

Location of the IGC

- Physical location within borough
- Accessibility – footfall and transportation links
- Immediate surroundings/campus

B. Observed influence of Design on interaction

Influence of IGC Furnishings

- Ownership/identity with the IGC (ie posters, pictures, strollers)
- Creates atmosphere (welcoming/homelike, clinical, soulless)
- Influence behaviour/interaction (ie furniture, colour schemes)

Observed Use of IGC physical spaces (central space)

- Passing through
- Stop Gap: Waiting/Leaving (secondary behaviours)
- Attending activity/service in lobby

Observed Patterns of movement in the IGC

- From front door to day care space
- Staff crossing lobby
- Front/back of lobby (entry points)
- Congregate in front or back

3. Delivery of the IGC

A. Use of IGC (who, how)

Users of the IGC (*Who is not using the IGC, not many to observe)

- Age
- Gender
- Relationships of users
- Stakeholders perception of who it was meant for
- Borough wide or local community
- Staff

Uses of the IGC

- Activities & services
- Meetings & info gathering
- Scheduled or drop in
- Age segregated (exclusive) or potentially IG (inclusive)
- Daycare/playspace
- Staff office

Levels and types of interaction occurring

- Age groups
- Relationships between users
- Time (when interaction is observed/not observed)
- Solitary or interactive

B. Management & Facilitation

(*Staff*) Management/organisation of the building

- Set up of furniture
- Open/closed doors
- Items left in lobby
- Signs
- *When the IGC is used (hrs of operation - evenings and weekends)*

Staff performance (*in their roles*)

- Professional behaviour, (ie. start late/finish early)
- Professional background and experience

Facilitation of activities (*internal and external staff*)

- Structure, purpose, explanation of activities
- Mix of ages, communication with ages
- Preparation/organisation of activities
- Timekeeping
- Unsupervised

C. Promotion and Implementation

Communication of IGC activities and services/ Schedule of Activities & Services

- Staff perceptions/language used
- Marketing and promotion of the IGC (materials)
- Exclusion/Inclusion of ages (Focus on children and family)
- CC label
- Not promoted as IG (Job club)
- Doesn't capture what is happening
- Timing/Scheduling of activities

Implementation of activities and services (content of activity)

- Age and ability appropriate
- IG element/approach (missed opportunities – where they could have been IG)
- Level of engagement (solitary or interactive)
- Age range (one age group)

- Level of attendance and cancellations
- Level and type of interaction
- Unsupervised (by staff and/or parents)

Appendix 10 – Final index for coding

Development of the IGC

- Background to the project (*why LBM was interested & chosen*)
- Staff/Stakeholders experience and expertise
- Funding
- Vision for the IGC (*what it will do/achieve*)
- Strategy for the IGC (*how it will be delivered/achieved*)
- Management/delivery of the project
- Stakeholder reflections on the process (*achievements, challenges and advice*)
- Utilisation of ex's of best practice and research
- User Involvement in process
- Understanding of IP (*defn, ex's*)
- Understanding(s) of what an IGC is (*is not*)
- Comparison to other types of centres (community centres, children's centres)

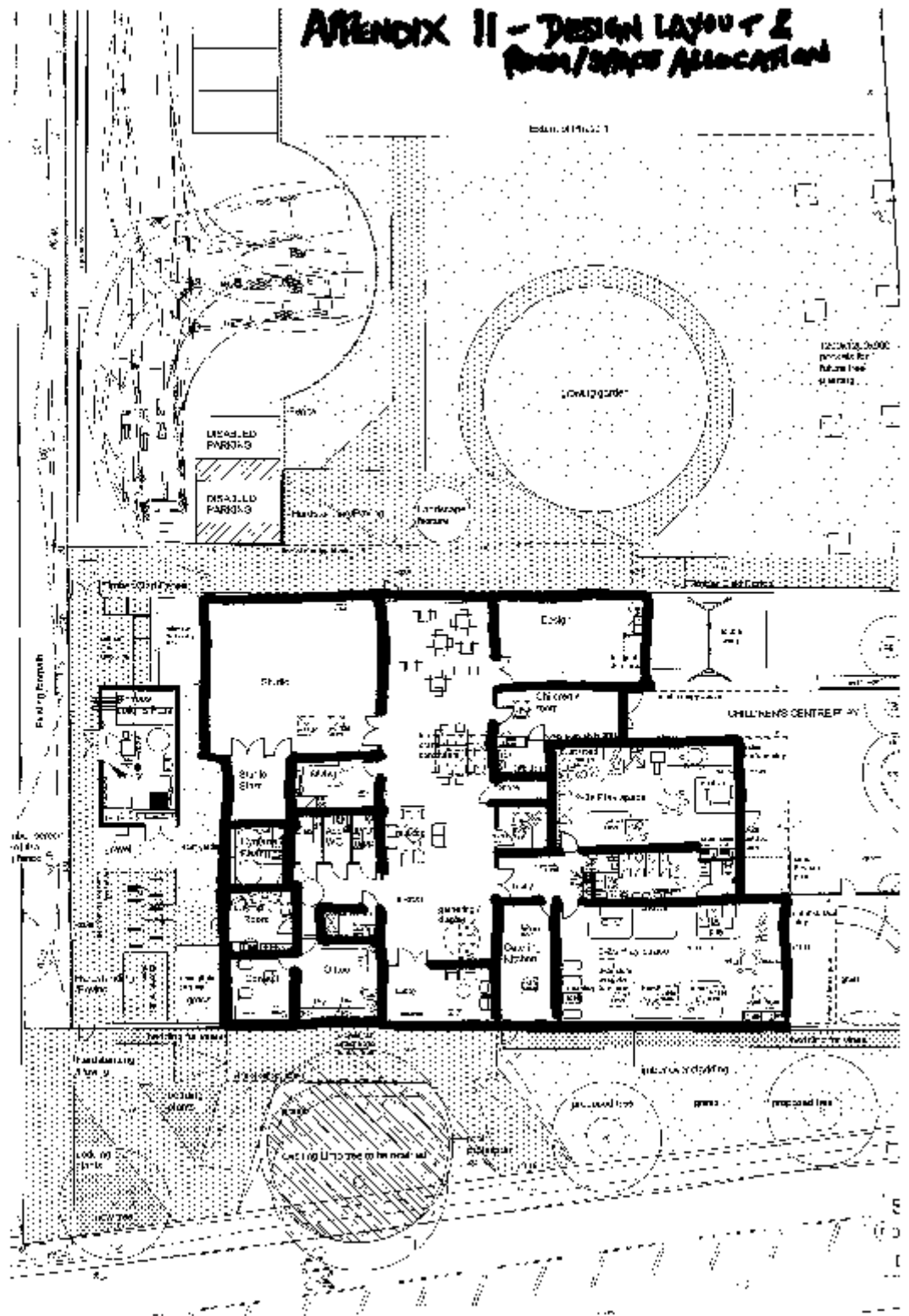
Design of the IGC

- Perceived influence of Design
- Design Features of the IGC/Perceptions of how space(s) will influence interaction
- Location of the IGC
- Influence of IGC Furnishings
- *Observed* Use of IGC physical spaces (*central space*)
- *Observed* Patterns of movement in the IGC

Delivery of the IGC

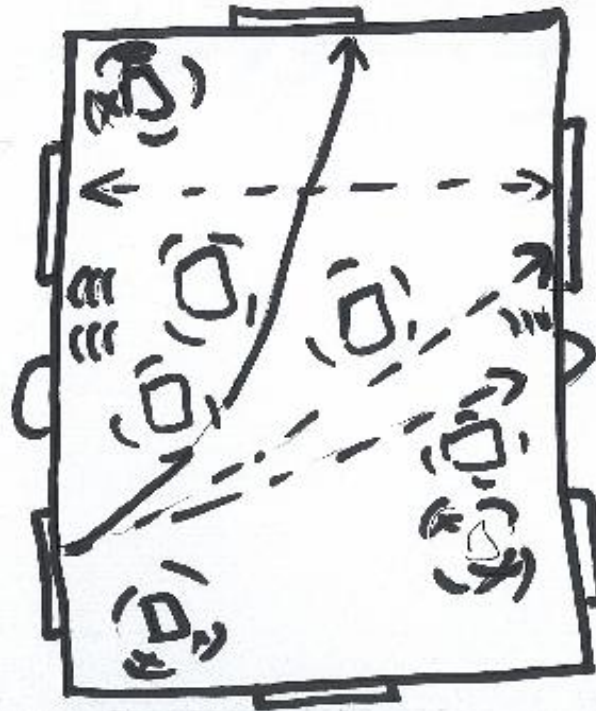
- Uses of IGC (who, how)
- Users of the IGC (*Who is not using the IGC, not many to observe)
- Levels and types of interaction occurring
- (*Staff*) Management/organisation of the building
- Staff performance (*in their roles*)
- Facilitation of activities (*internal and external staff*)
- Communication of IGC activities and services/ Schedule of Activities & Services
- Implementation of activities and services (content of activity)

Appendix 11 – Layout and space/room allocation in the Centre



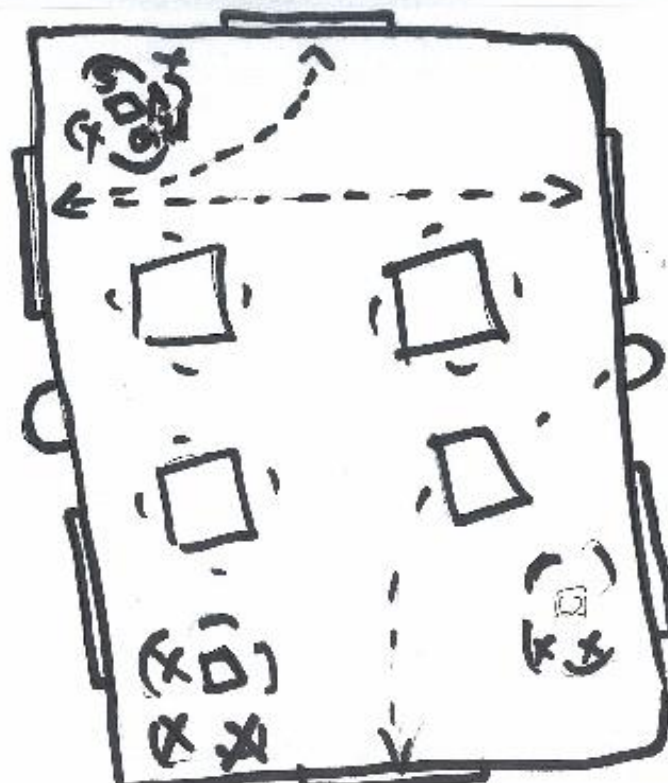
APPENDIX 12 - DIAGRAMS OF HOW CENTRE USERS CORRELATED IN THE CENTRE

X - Centre
Users
Sitting



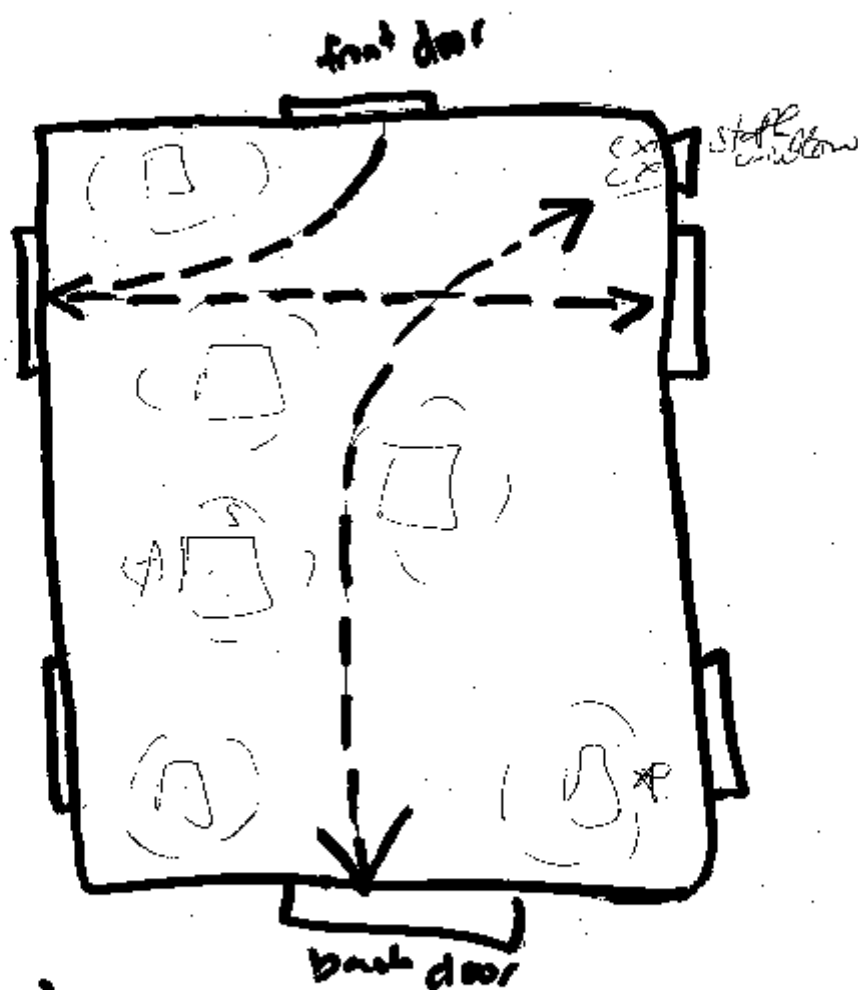
26.11.10
OBSERVATION
SCHEDULE

15.11.10
OBSERVATION
SCHEDULE



Centre
X - people
Sitting

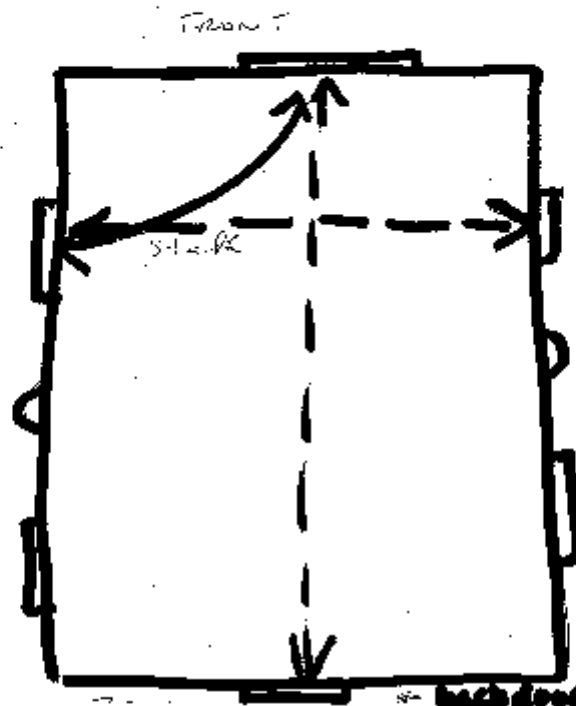
APPENDIX 13. DIAGRAMS OF CENTRE USERS MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE CENTRE



06.01.11
OBSERVATION
SCHEDULE

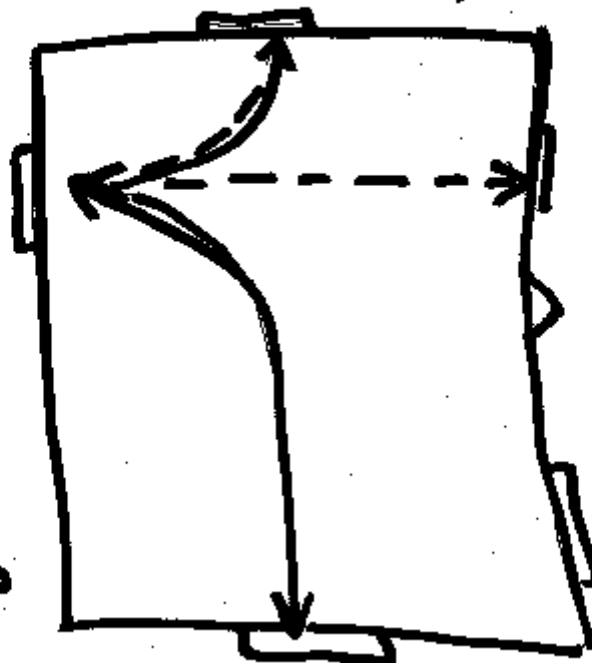
APPENDIX 13 CONT

17.02.11
OBSERVATION
SCHEDULE



* Staff
often come through
back to enter
the building.

08.11.10
OBSERVATION
SCHEDULE



Appendix 14 – Weekly calendar of special events



APPENDIX - 14

December at Acacia

A list of special events taking place in December at Acacia Intergenerational Centre

Fish 'n' Chip Friday

Enjoy oven baked fish and chips followed by an activity. Everyone is welcome. Booking essential. £2 per adult, £1 per child. Friday 3 December 12.30pm – 2.30pm.

Active Play Dance Special

Try out a new type of dancing! Suitable for children under 5 with their family and friends. Wednesday 8 December 3.30pm – 4.30pm

Natural Winter Decorations

Intergenerational session to make beautiful seasonal decorations from natural materials. Saturday 11 December 10.30am – 12.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

Christmas Lunch

Come in your favourite outfit, have lots of fun and enjoy a community Christmas lunch with people of all ages. Thursday 16 December, from 12.30pm – 2.30pm. Booking essential. £3 per adult. £1.50 per child over the age of five, under fives are free.

Time of our Lives - Intergenerational local history project

6-week project with people of all ages learning and exploring the local area's rich history. Thursdays 3.30pm – 4.30pm. Please register your interest (8 years plus).

For more information, please call 020 8274 5121

230 Grove Road, Mitcham Eastfields, CR4 1SD
www.merton.gov.uk/figc

